FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

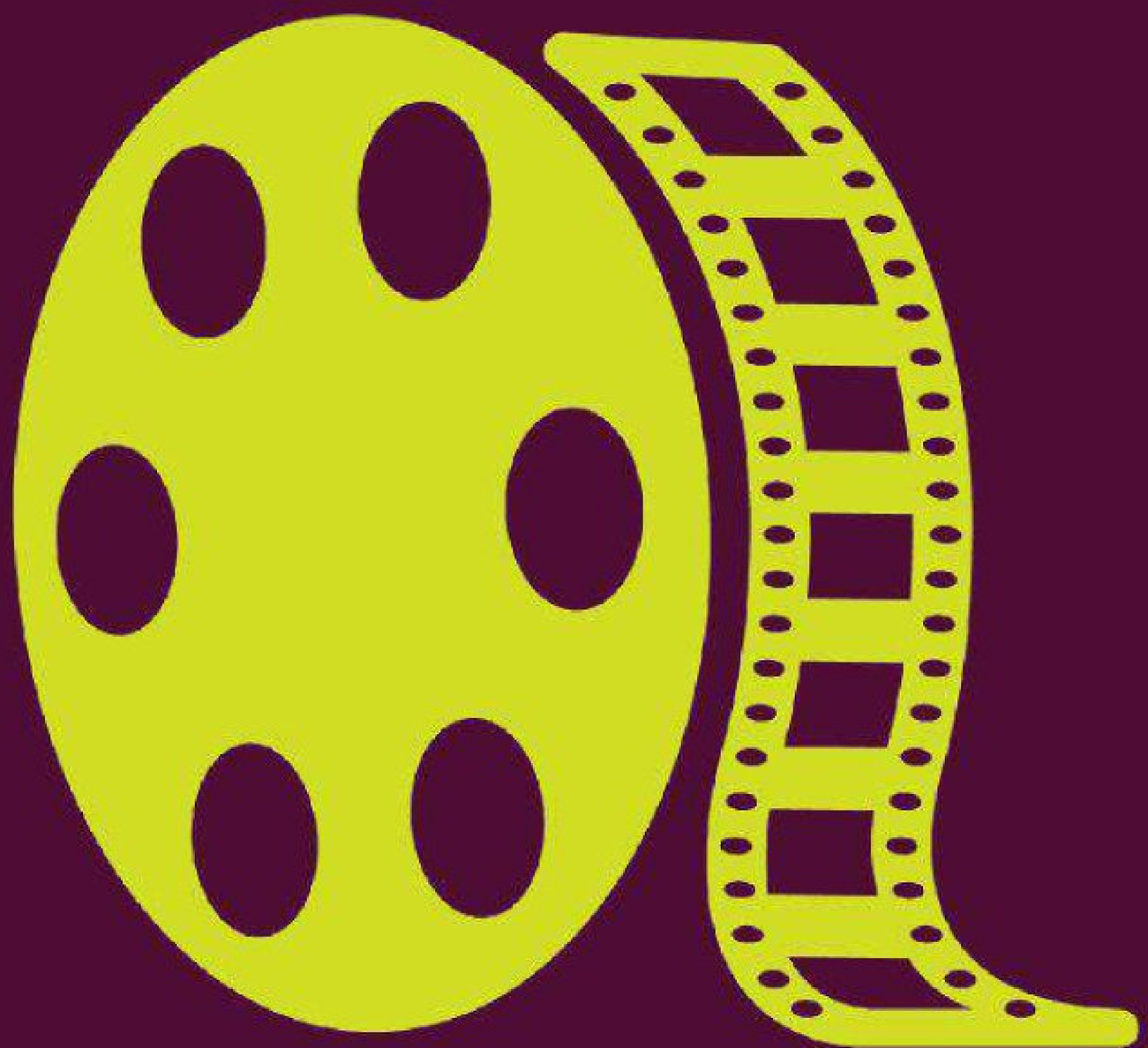
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Cover art by Andrew Jones
Visit **www.androidjones.com**
Turn to page 5 for more

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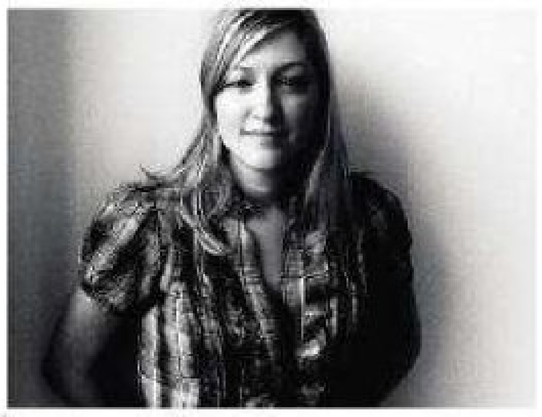
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*Source: Global Animation Industry: Strategies, Trends and Opportunities –2009. Animation Age Ghetto –www.tvtropes.com.

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Welcome... to a stellar issue



Greetings friends! It's been quite a month here at ImagineFX towers. We've been busying away behind the scenes to launch our search for the hottest digital artists around. Yep, I'm hugely excited to kick off our second Rising Stars search this issue. Because ImagineFX features many established names in the business, I think it's essential for us to showcase and promote young talent, too. Helping young artists attain recognition for what they do is very dear to my heart, so you must enter! Turn to page 34 for more info, and then skip to the next page to find out how to put together your perfect portfolio – you never know when that dream job will come up.

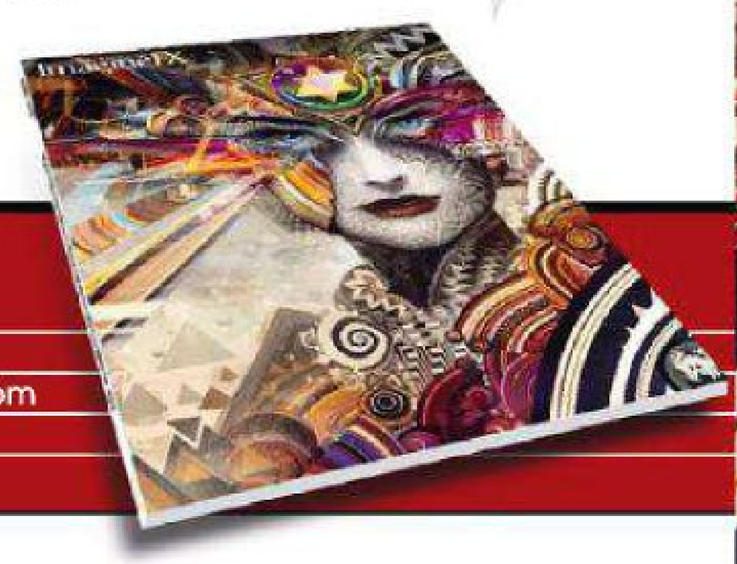
Speaking of established artists, our workshop section is fit to bursting with a Who's Who of the world's best artists. James Gurney, Marta Dahlig, Loïc Zimmermann and Nicole Cardiff all share their insights into the skills required for traditional and digital art. I'm sure that you're still dazzled by our striking cover art from Andrew Jones. He launches our workshop section into the stratosphere with rocket-fuelled advice on how you can revolutionise your art. The fun all starts on page 72.

Thanks for all of your feedback about the past few editions of ImagineFX. I always love to hear from you so if you have some art to share or point of views about the magazine, please get in touch.

Claire

Claire Howlett, Editor
claire@imaginefx.com

Our special cover for subscribers this issue.



Tell us what you think!

ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd,
30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA1 2BW, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1225 442 244 **Email:** mail@imaginefx.com
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ImagineFX
FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

EDITORIAL
CLAIRE HOWLETT EDITOR
claire@imaginefx.com
IAN DEAN DEPUTY EDITOR
ian.dean@futurenet.com
PAUL TYSALL ART EDITOR
paul.tysall@futurenet.com
CLIFF HOPE OPERATIONS EDITOR
clifford.hope@futurenet.co.uk
BEREN NEALE STAFF WRITER
beren.neale@futurenet.com
CONTACT US
POST ImagineFX Magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK
PHONE +44 (0) 1225 442244
EMAIL mail@imaginefx.com
WEB www.imaginefx.com
TWITTER: @imaginefx
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/imaginefx
DVD PROBLEMS +44 (0) 1225 822743
EMAIL support@futurenet.co.uk
CONTRIBUTIONS
Matthew Bolton, Matt Boyce, Mike Brennan, Lauren K Cannon, Rob Carney, Bill Corbett, Nicole Cardiff, Marta Dahlig, Mélanie Delon, Simon Dominic, Elizabeth Ellot, James Gurney, Rob Hale, Nick Harris, Richard Hill, Andrew Jones, Brynn Metheney, Simon Middleweek, Annis Naeem, Angela Nicholson, Saejin Oh, Luke ONeill, Andy Outsted, Cynthia Sheppard, Jonathan Standing, Ella Taylor, Remko Troost, Loic Zimmermann
PHOTOGRAPHY Future Photography Studio
STEVE JARRATT group senior editor
STEVE GOTOBED group senior art editor
ROBIN ABBOTT creative director
JIM DOUGLAS editorial director
ADVERTISING +44 (0) 207 0424124
NICK WEATHERALL advertising sales director
nick.weatherall@futurenet.com
RICARDO SIDOLI account sales manager
ricardo.sidoli@futurenet.com
MALCOLM STOODLEY London sales director
malcolm.stoodley@futurenet.com
ROSS ARTHURS senior sales executive
ross.arthurs@futurenet.com
LAURA WATSON senior sales executive
laura.watson@futurenet.com
MARKETING
DANIEL BRUCE brand manager
EMMA KERSHAW campaign manager
JOANNE WHITE promotions executive
CIRCULATION
STUART BROWN trade marketing manager
RICHARD JEFFERIES international account manager
RACHAEL COCK circulation & trade marketing director
PRINT & PRODUCTION
VIV TURNER production co-ordinator
ROSE GRIFFITHS production manager
NOLA COKELY ad production manager
NATHAN DREWETT ad production co-ordinator
MICHELLE ROGERS operational purchasing manager
RICHARD MASON head of production
LICENSING
TIM HUDSON international licensing director
FUTURE PUBLISHING LIMITED
STUART ANDERTON group publishing director
MATTHEW PIERCE group publisher
FIONA TULLY publisher
MARK WOOD chief executive
SUBSCRIPTIONS 0844 848 2852
UK, EUROPE AND RoW
Phone: 0844 848 2852
(outside of UK +44 (0) 1604 251045)
Web: www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
Email: contact@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk
US AND CANADA
Phone (toll-free): 1-800 428 3003
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Chief Executive: Stevie Spring
Non-executive Chairman: Roger Parry
Group Finance Director: John Bowman
Tel: +44 (0)20 7042 4000 (London)
Tel: +44 (0)1225 442244 (Bath)

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Featured artists

ImagineFX brings together some of the world's finest artists to share their techniques and inspiration for creating stunning artwork

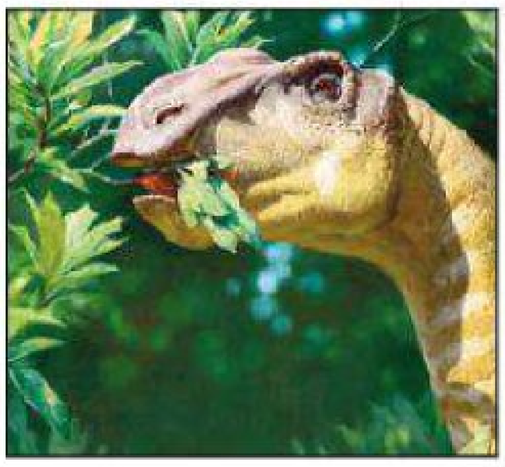


Marco Mazzoni



Traditional-artist-turned-concept-designer Marco loves to create sci-fi scenes of people in crisis. Mixing his traditional theory with digital techniques ensures his art has unique depth and mood. Despite all of his achievements, Marco is best known for a throwaway painting that became an overnight internet sensation and changed his fortunes. Find out what it is on page 56.

marcomazzoni.cghub.com



James Gurney



An ImagineFX regular and an extraordinary artist, James has a wealth of art theory in his head, and on page 76 he focuses on references, such as photographs and drawing studies. Here, James reveals the tricks needed to make the most of your resources to create better art. This is the perfect workshop for both seasoned artists and newcomers.

www.jamesgurney.com



Marta Dahlig



Marta has been working her digital magic in the pages of ImagineFX since 2006, and on page 84 she returns with a workshop packed with beautiful textures and subtle brush skills. There are few artists who can pack a painting with so much lavish detail and rich fabrics and make it look effortless. Any chance to gain an insight into her process should be taken.

www.marta-dahlig.com

Loïc Zimmermann



A regular contributor to ImagineFX since launch, Loïc began working in CG before moving to Los Angeles to work as a concept designer and character supervisor on many movies. Now he likes to experiment with his personal art, using mixed media and collage to create stunning portraits. Over on page 90 he demonstrates how painting in a loose style can reap rewards.

www.e338.com

Annis Naeem



Currently studying at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, Annis has already caught the eye of a publisher. He collaborated on Scott Robertson's book Drive and his second book is due out later this year. Looking to expand his portfolio, which has its focus on vehicle design and sci-fi, this issue Annis has created a classic fantasy scene. See how he made it on page 96.

www.annisnaeem.com

Nicole Cardiff



This issue we welcome back yet another ImagineFX Rising Star winner from last year. Nicole Cardiff is an accomplished traditional and digital artist creating card, cover and interior art for Wizards of the Coast, White Wolf and National Geographic, among many others. This issue, Nicole shows how to add a traditional feel to digital paintings. Discover her secrets on page 100.

www.artofnicolecardiff.com

Sterekaff.com



Cover artist

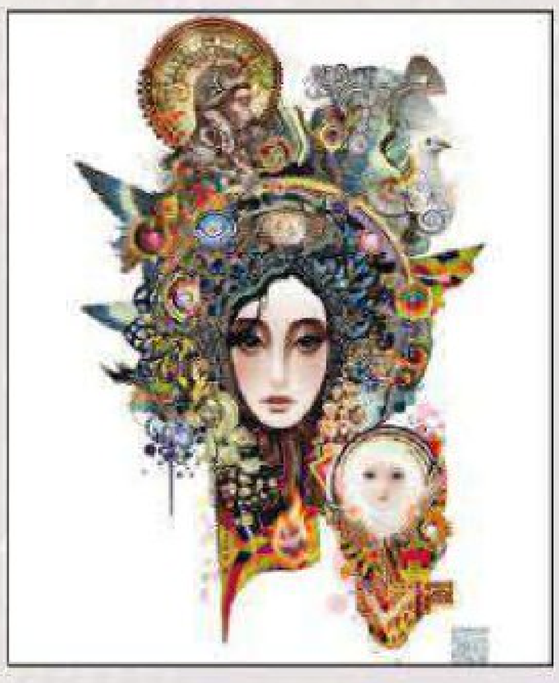
A digital artist turned live-art pioneer, Andrew Jones is a celebrated Painter user who has managed to move beyond the canvas



Andrew Jones

COUNTRY: US
SOFTWARE: Painter
WEB: www.androidjones.com

The ex-Massive Black artist has carved out a niche for himself creating multi-layered, avant-garde paintings in Painter. Each portrait is laden with subtle detail and form, a patchwork of rich textures that practically demand a closer look. He's since begun to experiment with live digital painting, having recently projected his art live onto the Sydney Opera House.



In progress

How Andrew painted this month's cover...



We challenged Andrew to create a cover image around the theme of revolution. He began with a focal point, a beautiful face, and then started to explode outwards with waves of colour and painterly affected strokes. The form of the cover image began to take shape...



In this second version, Andrew has worked up his female's face and dug into the collage of strokes, shapes and textures that he uses to build his paintings. Needing a less graphic feel, we ask Andrew to soften the textures, placing more focus on the female's eyes and composition.



The final painting arrives for our cover and Andrew has toned down the digital elements without losing the impact of the piece. He's created a foreground collage to frame the jawline, alluding to a collar and colourful, textured dress.

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ImagineFX Fantasy & Sci-Fi Digital Art

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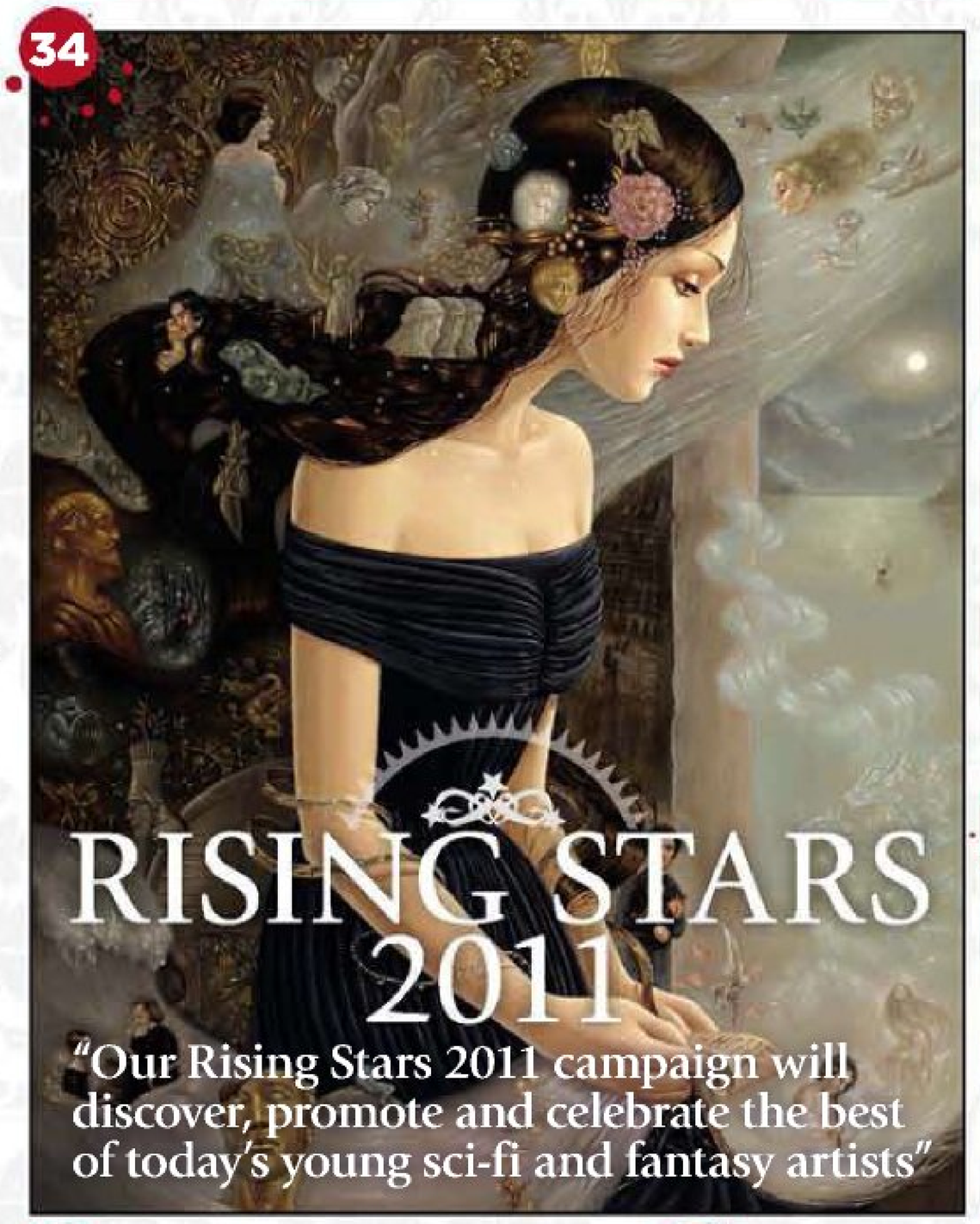
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Reader FXPosé
THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART



See page 8 for the best new art















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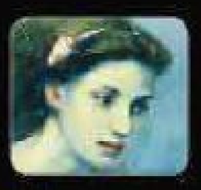
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ImagineFX Workshops

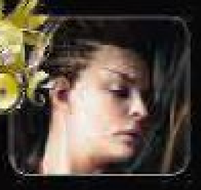
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Inject new life into your work with Andrew Jones.



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James Gurney helps you source the right references.



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Paint a female that doesn't conform to stereotypes.



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Learn about ArtRage's manipulation tools.



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Nifty tips for giving your images an 'on the fly' look.



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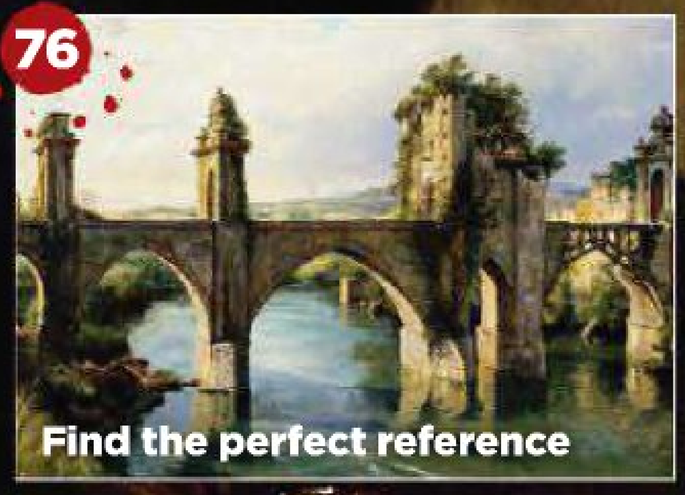


100 Convey the feel of natural media
Nicole Cardiff gives her work an illustrative look.

Artist Q&A

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Combine animal and human faces, quickly create distance, pose a sexy supervillian, perfect exotic flowers, draw an animal head-on and lots more!









Video workshops on your free DVD...
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Turn to page 114 for more…

ON YOUR DVD

This month's essential art resources…



Over seven hours of video tuition
See our fantasy art pros in action

241 photo reference images
Weapons, buildings, people and more!



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THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX ARTIST OF THE MONTH

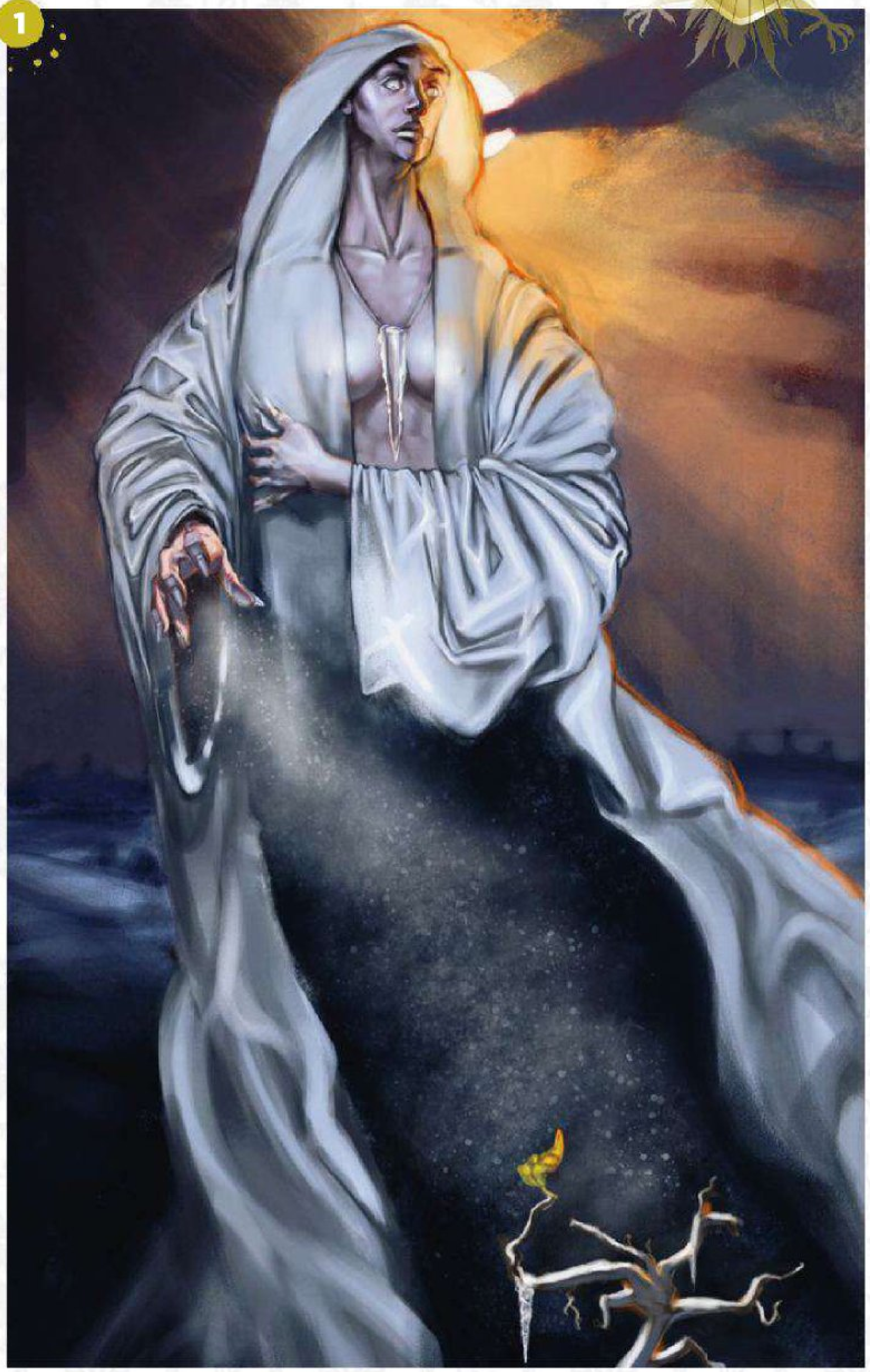
Frank Gressie

LOCATION: The Netherlands
WEB: www.frank-gressie.blogspot.com
EMAIL: frank_gressie@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"My father is an artist," says Frank. "He always had lost of art books around the house, and I could stare for hours at works from Frank Frazetta and Boris Vallejo and many other fantastic illustrators when I was younger."

Frank went to a graphic design school in Rotterdam, where he soon decided that he wasn't keen on designing brochures or folders. "I wanted to do art and be my own boss. I didn't do any art school, and had to learn everything myself. I'm mainly studying the old masters from Rembrandt and Rockwell to Sargent and Albert Dorne."



1 ICE QUEEN "I did this for the character of the week on ConceptArt.org; we had to portray a season. I chose winter. I wanted to do a strong-looking, holy-like ice mistress, who can be relentless to nature and people."

2 WATERCOLLECTOR "This one started as a scribble, actually. I wanted to have a painterly feel to it, but also keep it accurate. I learned that from looking at Frazetta's work. It was a real challenge finding the right light for the girl and all the green, especially the dappled light effect."



ARTIST OF THE MONTH

Congratulations Frank – you've won a copy of Exotique 5 and Character Modeling 3! To find out more about these two indispensable art resources, go to www.ballisticpublishing.com.

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

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Artist crit

ImagineFX contributor Cynthia Sheppard finds herself being pulled into this immersive image



"I love the dappled light on the girl's back, the atmospheric perspective in the receding forest, and the way Frank suggests there's a vast world for the character to explore outside the frame."

Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

1



Daniel Arian Bourke

LOCATION: Ireland
WEB: outlaw-blog.blogspot.com
EMAIL: otaku8489@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I'm an aspiring digital painter with roots in the comic side of things," says Daniel. "I swore blind in my teens that I would be the next Katsuhiro Otomo, but slowly, and particularly when I went to college, my horizons were irretrievably broadened."

Daniel acquired a graphics tablet about two years ago, which led him to discover the digital medium. "I haven't looked back since," he says. "Now I have an insatiable hunger to improve and reach the lofty heights of those that I admire! They always manage to keep me motivated."

1 EMPTY PILGRIMAGE "This one is like the definition of a result from a very cloudy concept. I just started blocking in shapes, and then some more shapes, and eventually a narrative began unfolding, culminating in a finished piece of sorts. Never underestimate spontaneity in art."

2 THANE "I had a lot of fun with this one. The high contrast and general aesthetics of the character really appealed to me. I was surprisingly pleased with the results attained."

2



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Oliver Meinerding

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.oliverartist.com
EMAIL: oliver@oliverartist.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



"I grew up a role-playing, comic book-reading nerd," says Oliver, "and now I'm a full-time graphic designer and freelance Illustrator." Always in awe of the comic and game artwork he saw, Oliver used to spend hours copying his favourite artists.

While his day job involves designing for some "big global brands", Oliver likes nothing more than to get home and get out the inks, paint and tablet. "I have to keep a tough schedule," he says. "After working all day I come home and hang out with the family, so I don't really get a chance to start working again till late in the evenings. I regularly burn the midnight oil." He's now making a concerted effort to break into the field of game art.



1 UNRAVEL "This was a personal piece inspired by the Björk song Unravel. This was a nice chance to throw a bunch of things I love at one image. It's got a bit of ink, watercolour, cut paper, coloured pencil, acrylic and some Photoshop."

2 FOR GENTLEMEN ONLY "This is oil and Photoshop. Sort of a modern day Siren meets deadly Gorgon. Half beautiful woman, half bloodthirsty tentacle monster who just wants a little bit of your love. I like including graphic elements into pieces when I can, so adding the little speech bubble and pattern background was a treat."



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Oliver's images were shaped during spare moments after work and 'family time', and there's a loose, unleashed feel to them. They showcase a great style and technical skill, but most importantly they're really, really fun to look at."
Beren Neale, Staff Writer

1



Gabriel Verdon

LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.gabrielverdon.com
EMAIL: gabriel.verdon@gmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Gabriel started taking digital art seriously when he first got his hands on Photoshop about five years ago. "Since then I've been working hard towards securing a career in the video games industry," he says. "While I'm not there yet, I'm getting closer every day."

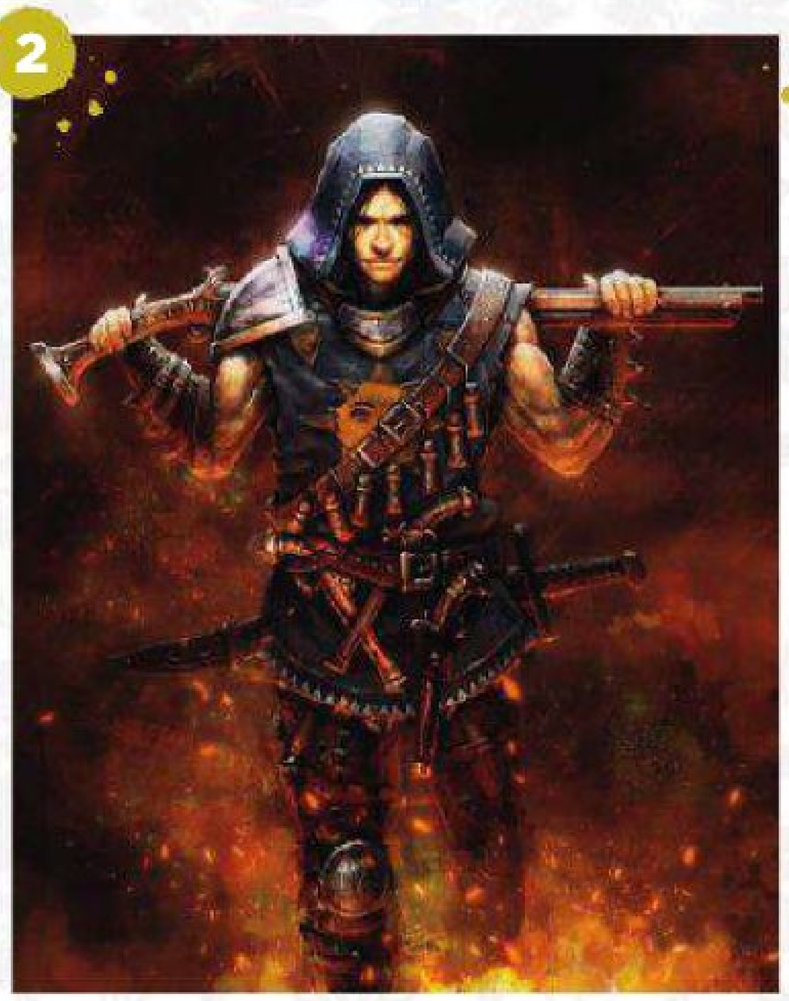
"My two favourite things are challenge and variety, so my ideal job would be one where I could do everything from interface design to concept art. Whenever I can find the time, I like to hone my foundational art skills by doing anatomy and landscape studies and life drawing."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I'm impressed by the detailing that's gone into Gabriel's Ex-Musketeer image. Going the extra mile with a character's weapons, clothing and other accessories works wonders in bringing a fantasy figure to life."
Cliff Hope, Operations Editor

2



3



1 ARCANE PISTOLIER "This is based on the following brief: 'A young woman, using a longsword and arcane-looking revolver. She has a pair of belts filled with bullets crossed over her hips and pretty standard cowgirl clothes. The hair is a dark shade of brown, and she has brown eyes.'"

2 EX-MUSKETEER "Another piece from the same series, the brief was to draw a character from a game of 7th Sea (almost like Pirates and Dragons). My goal here was to experiment with photo textures."

3 HELL KNIGHT "I did this piece as a request for a fellow I met on an internet forum dedicated to traditional games. I tried to emulate the styles of Chris Rahn and Justin Sweet, and I think it worked out pretty well."

FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com

Nikola Odic
LOCATION: Canada
WEB: www.odicart.com
EMAIL: nikolaodic@odicart.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Nikola is a concept artist and illustrator living in Toronto, with a lifelong passion for art, history and anthropology. "My interest in art blossomed at high school and quickly moved into exploring and experimenting with different digital and traditional media," he says.

Having recently graduated from Sheridan College with a degree in scientific and technical Illustration, Nikola is employed as a 2D artist intern at Reverie World Studios in Toronto.

1



1 ALIEN GRUNT "A design of an alien species far removed from humans, but still aiming to show signs of intelligence. It was a good exercise in looking at just how different you can make a creature before the viewer can no longer relate to it. I ended up keeping somewhat humanoid proportions and bipedalism (quadrupeds or other non-bipedal designs just looked like animals), but removing any recognisable facial features."

2 SNIPER ON WHEELS "A playful character design, exploring the idea of a cavalry unit after the use of horses, but before tanks were commonplace. This sniper could rapidly deploy into position to shoot, or lead a charge with his sabre."

2



IMAGINEFX CRIT



"I love the idea of a steampunk rollerblader scooting about a battlefield – this would be great fun to play. In keeping with the concept, Nikola has ensured his sniper rifle looks light and sleek."
Ian Dean,
Deputy Editor

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Mark Bulahao
LOCATION: Philippines
WEB: edictiv.deviantart.com
EMAIL: mark.bulahao@yahoo.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



Having been a pencil artist trying to break the comics book industry for most of his life, Mark had an epiphany. "Before even getting noticed I realised it wasn't for me," he says. "I found out that I derive more pleasure in creating my own concepts, rather than drawing Batman following a writer's words."

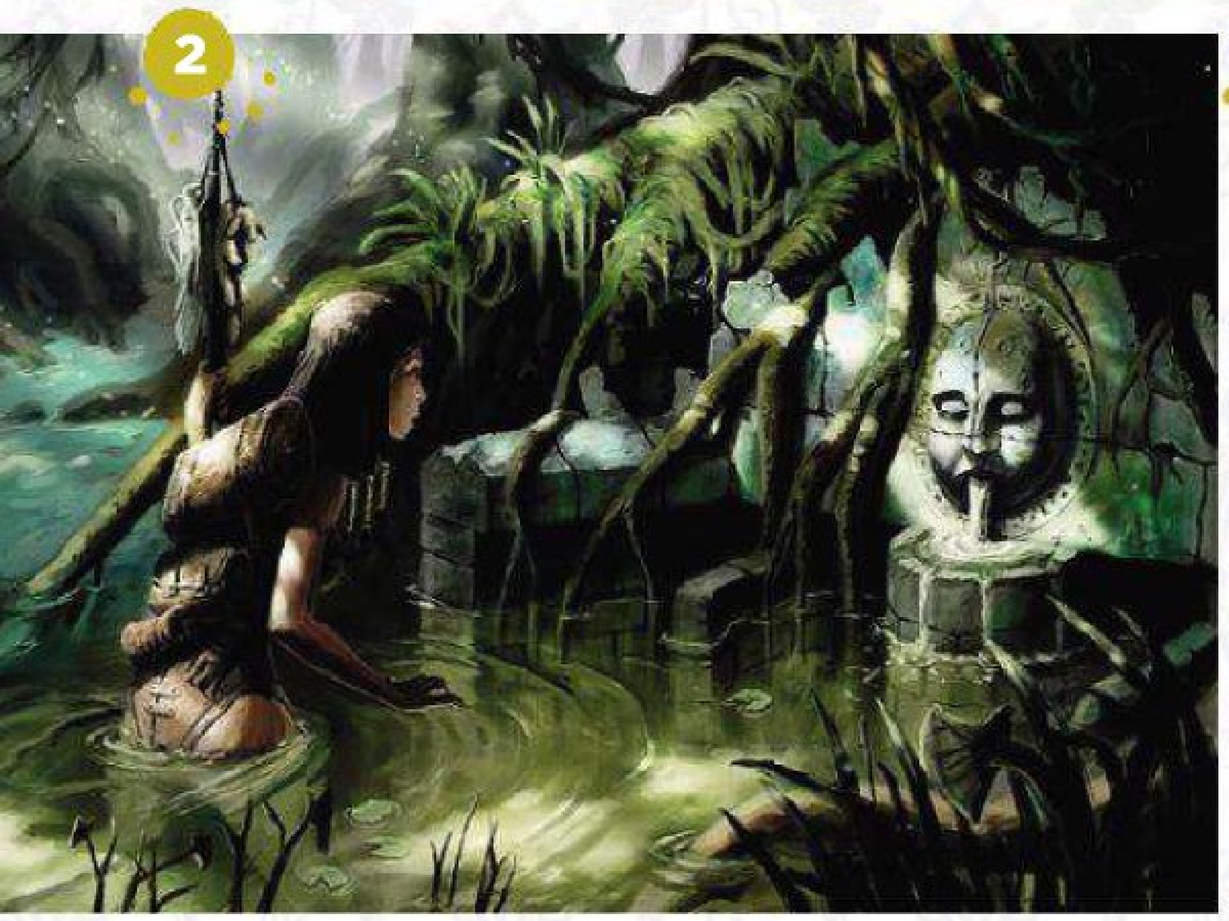
And so the world of concept art beckoned. "Being a gamer and looking at awesome paintings on sites like deviantART and ConceptArt got me into digital art."

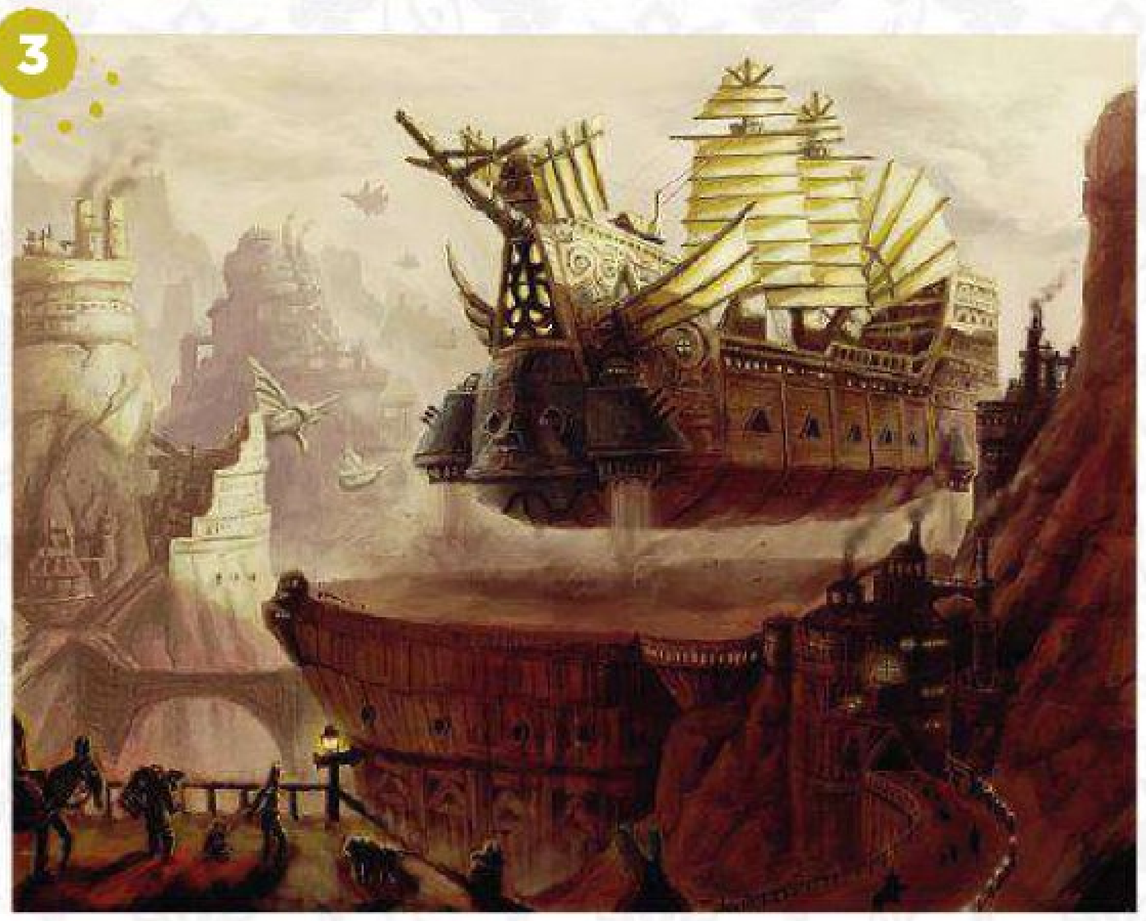


1 BESUNARI "This started out as a practice piece for lighting, temperature contrast, skin tones and textures. Having a knack for details, I kept painting and it ended up as a finished artwork. I'm a big fan of armour concepts, especially helmets, and I have hundreds of designs in my sketchbooks."

2 FIND OF A LIFETIME "I painted this after studying tutorials on colour combination and variations. I had trouble with hues back then and this image boosted my confidence. I tried to capture a cinematic atmosphere, with dramatic lighting, on a scene that tells a story. I don't think that a fantasy portfolio would be complete without a forest scene."

3 SKYWHALE DOCK "This was inspired by the Facebook game Battle Stations, which I'm an avid player of. I didn't want to do a pure fan art though, so I created my own airship, which is a mixture of oriental and western ship elements. I wanted to do a painting with scale and distance."





Maribel Monedero Meléndez
LOCATION: Spain
WEB: princesselemmiriel.deviantart.com
EMAIL: marhya21@hotmail.com
SOFTWARE: Photoshop, Paint Tool SAI



Currently studying at university, Maribel's love of drawing and painting has been with her since childhood. "Art is a very important part of my life and a way to express myself," she says.

Seeking inspiration from music and video games, she's also influenced by Japanese culture. "My style is very personal and quite defined, but I'm always open to new possibilities. I'm a very dynamic person and I like to change, learn new things and improve my art constantly and that can be appreciated in each of my pictures."

1 THE BODYGUARD "Beautiful and lethal are the words that describe this character. Her real name is Midori, which in English means green, so that's why I used green colours and textures. Her design is very simple but quite attractive at the same time, thanks to the luminous colours."

2 PERFECT SMOKE "This picture represents a beautiful and exotic courtesan. The delicate kimono she's wearing and her elaborate hairstyle are my favourite parts of the picture. I was inspired by Art Nouveau: despite the vibrant colours, the picture itself reflects calm and peace."

IMAGINEFX CRIT



"Maribel's 'dynamic' personality shines through her Japanese-style characters – both quietly seductive and potentially lethal. Add to that her own special colour palette, and you've got a lovely pair of beauties."
Beren Neale, Staff Writer





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Reader FXPosé

THE PLACE TO SHARE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Nick Shardlow

LOCATION: England
WEB: nickshardlow.carbonmade.com
EMAIL: nts22@cantab.net
SOFTWARE: Photoshop



At the age of 23, Nick has been learning to paint digitally for the past five years. He says he first got into digital art at university through sites such as ConceptArt. "Seeing the artists there fired my enthusiasm and inspired me to start teaching myself everything I could about illustration and image-making."

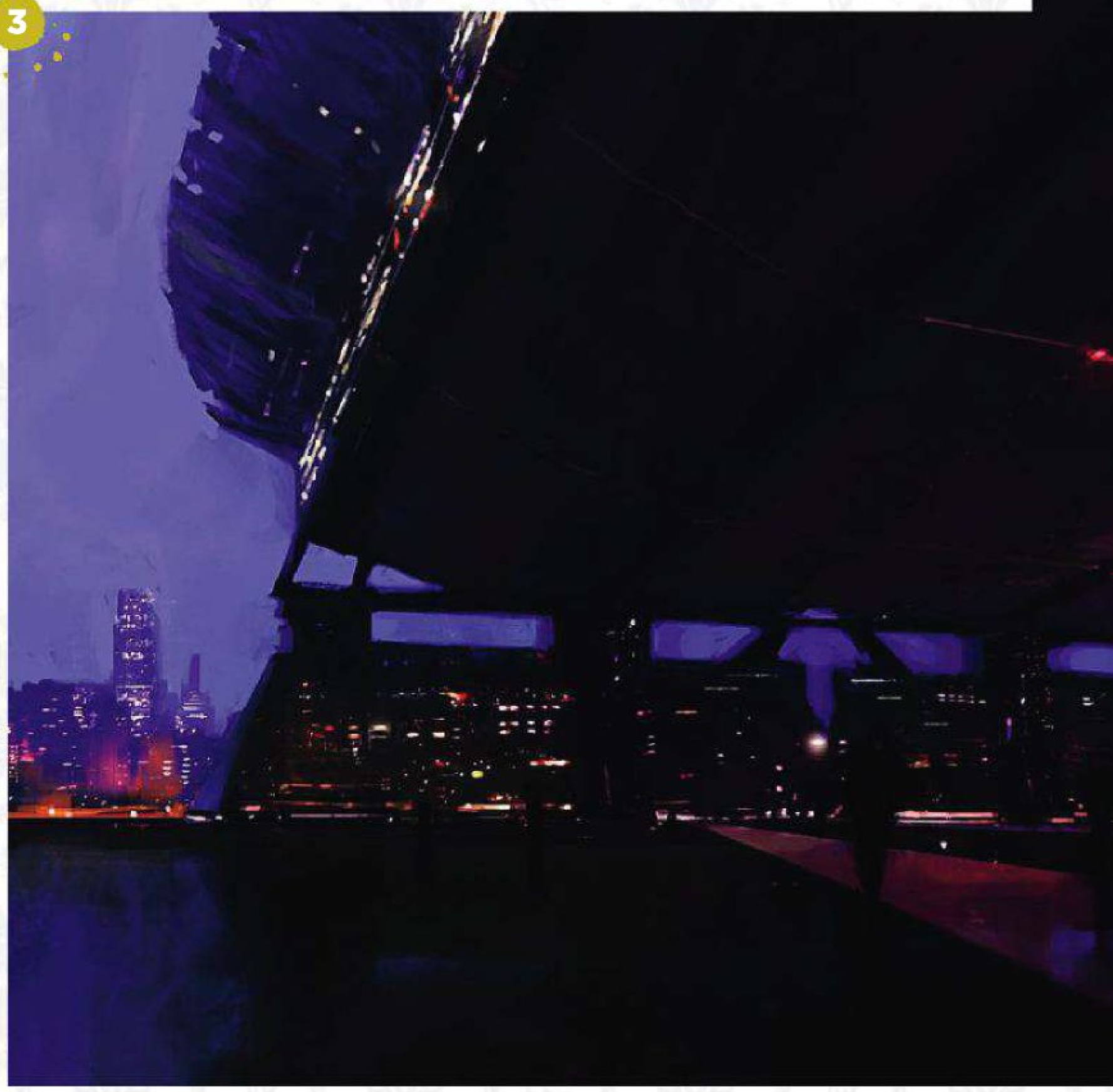
Late last year he took the decision to switch careers after three years of being a musician, to finally focus on pursuing his ambitions as an artist. "I'm now developing my portfolio while looking for my first job in the industry with a view to making a career in visual development," he explains. "Especially concept work in games, and hopefully in films, too."



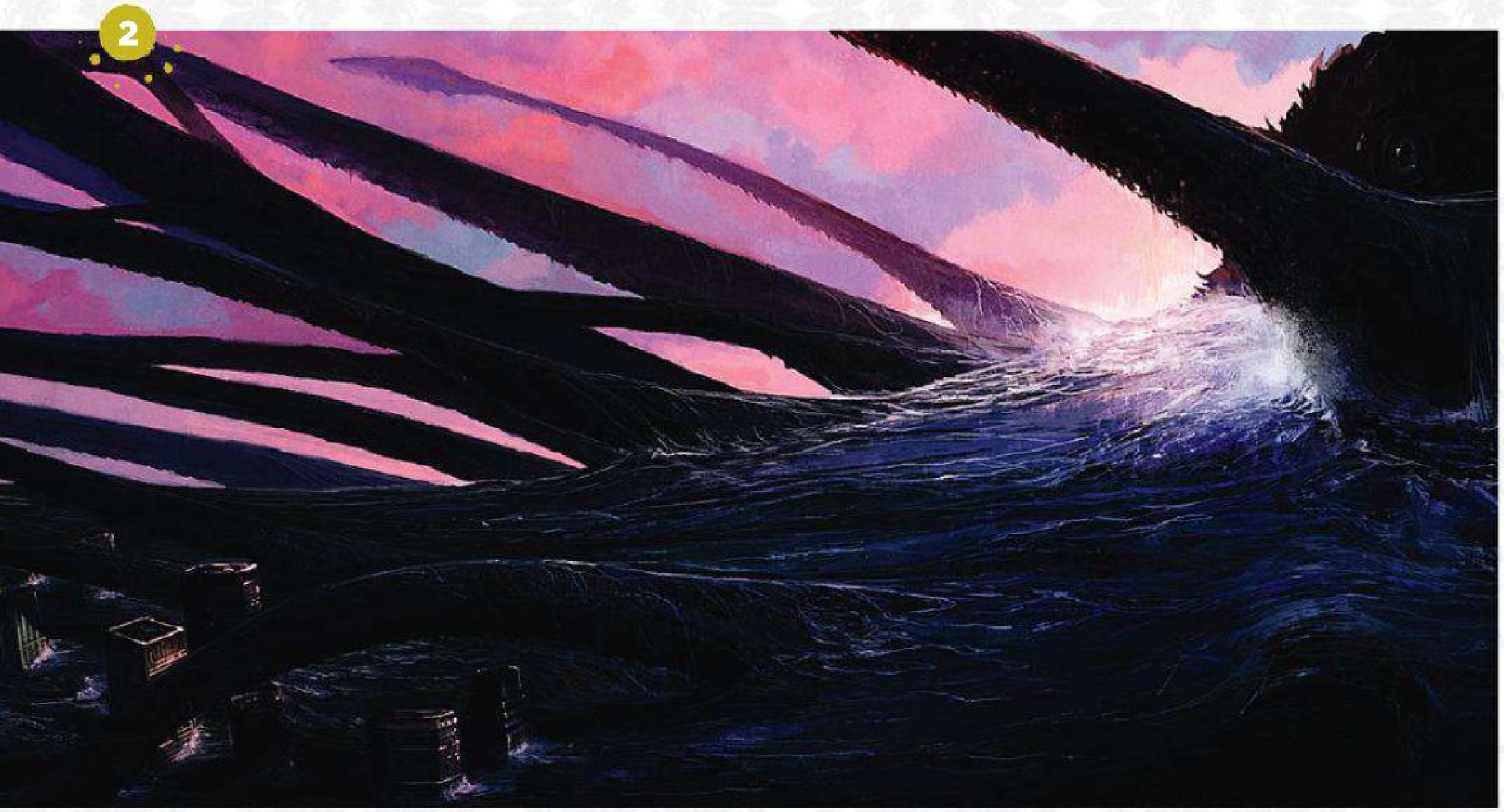
1 BLUE STAG "A creature concept that I developed along the lines of a rare symbiosis between a species of deer and a fungus that blooms from its bark-like skin and antlers."

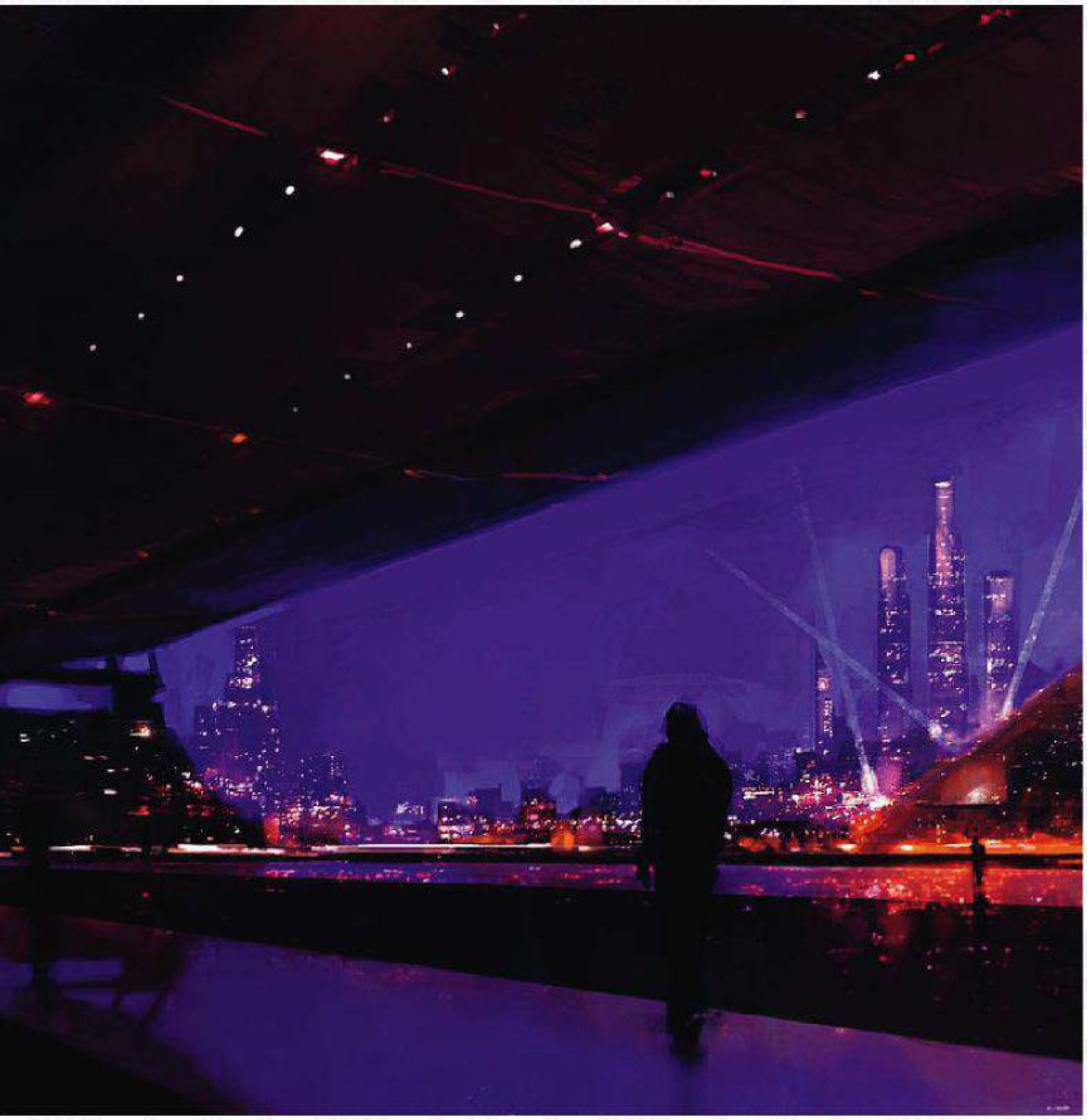
2 ATTACK "Kind of a B-movie homage; I've always been fascinated and slightly scared by sea creatures, and in the end I really enjoyed working up the impression of a turbulent ocean crashing around."

3 SUBURB "I love using slightly sci-fi urban themes, and this quick painting was made chiefly to try to capture that feeling brought on by seeing bright city lights against a twilight sky – something I've always enjoyed."



FXPosé submissions to: fxpose@imaginefx.com





SEND US YOUR ARTWORK!

Want to see your digital art grace these very pages? Send your work to us, along with an explanation of your techniques, the title of each piece of art, a photo of yourself and your contact details. Images should be sent as 300dpi JPEG files, on CD or DVD. All artwork is submitted on the basis of a non-exclusive worldwide licence to publish, both in print and electronically.

You can also email submissions for FXPosé. Bear in mind that files must be no more than 5MB in total, or we won't receive them. **fxpose@imaginefx.com**

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:
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ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath, BA1 2BW
UK

fileplanet.com

This summer the pages of CGHub will feature traditional fairy tales painted in a whole new light.



CGHub Call for entries

Once upon a tablet CGHub's latest challenge, headed by Bobby Chiu, tackles the essence of classic fairy tales

Ever thought Prince Charming should have been born a girl or that Jack gave giants a bad name? Perhaps Red Riding Hood was the real monster of the story? This is the premise for CGHub's Bobby Chiu Fairy Tales Re-Imagined Challenge.



"Art is self-referencing, which means we often have to re-imagine old stories in such a way that we make them new again," says the award-winning artist as he explains his 'Fairy tales with a twist' challenge. "So take your favourite classic fairy tale and redraw a scene or character from it. Cinderella in space? Sure! Sleeping Handsome and Princess Charming? Why not? Here's your chance to re-invent the classics!"

Winning entrants will need to impress Bobby with their imaginative reinterpretation of classic fairy tale monsters, characters and creatures. "The idea will always be the most important thing," stresses Bobby. "I'm looking for visions that break clichés and make me think, 'Hmmm, I've never considered this story in that way before.' I'll obviously also look for technical skill to convey the proper mood and allow the image to stand up in its own right," confirms the artist.

Starting on 4 May, the challenge will run for three months across CGHub's



THE PRIZES

Just look at the collection of goodies that are on offer!

General prizes

- Original artwork from Bobby Chiu for the winners, and original process artwork for the runners up.
- ZBrush 4 licences to the winners of the 2D and 3D categories.
- Two one-year subscriptions to ImagineFX and 3D World for the first-placed entrant in each category.
- Feature article and interview on cghub.com for top three winners of the 2D and 3D categories.
- Signed copies of Steambot's Spark.
- Signed copies of Anthology vol. 2.

2D prizes

- 2D Grand prize from Futurepoly: Online Master Class in Digital painting, signed and framed prints (one from each instructor) and the GuildWars 2 art book.
- 2D second and third place winners receive signed and framed prints and GuildWars 2 art books.

3D prizes

- 3D Grand prize from Futurepoly: Online Master Class in 3D-Modelling for games, signed and framed prints (one from each instructor) and the Guild-Wars 2 art book.
- A Schoolism.com and Imaginism courses with Bobby Chiu worth $998 will go to the winner of the 3D category.
- A Master Class and two full Master workshops passes valued at $1,120 from CG Master Workshops for the winner of the 3D category.
- 3D second and third place winners receive signed and framed prints and GuildWars 2 art books.

Bobby Chiu artwork is up for grabs, as are one-year subscriptions to ImagineFX!



Please note: prizes and competition info are correct at time of going to press. Please visit **www.cghub.com** for full details.

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F.E.A.R. AND LOATHING
Mitch Cotie tells us how he suffered for his art while working on the third instalment of F.E.A.R., the first-person shooter that's horror with a capital 'H'.
Page 23



STRAIGHT TO THE POINT
The short sword comes in handy when Justin Gerard needs metal and filigree references. It's also pretty good at persuading burglars to look elsewhere for loot.
Page 24



HAVE A BANANA!
Polish concept artist Szymon Biernacki effortlessly conveys humour in his work, and is just one of our six fantasy art finds from around the world.
Page 26



Just some of the original signed artwork of Bobby Chiu's take on the classic Ugly Duckling tale.

"Take your favourite classic fairy tale and redraw a scene or character from it. Cinderella in space? Why not?"

INDUSTRY INSIGHT

BOBBY CHIU

The acclaimed fantasy artist has this advice for would-be entrants

Efficient brainstorming
Brainstorm in short spurts. Record all your ideas, good or bad – even the bad ones might have good parts you can use later.

Reference
Come up with an idea and some good study sketches, then look for reference to support it. Don't look for reference first, or you'll risk becoming reliant on it later.

Third-person perspective
Imagine you didn't paint your image. What would you think of it then? Would you understand what the artist is trying to express?

Trust your eyes
Your eyes instinctively know if something in your image is off. Trust them.

Knowledge
The viewer can tell if you've drawn something you didn't understand. Know and understand the world you live in and apply that knowledge to your painting.

Don't work in a vacuum
Post frequently to benefit from fresh eyes of the community.

Don't be precious
Brainstorm several concepts before investing too much time in any one idea, and don't be afraid to start over if things aren't working out.

Help others
Don't expect to get a lot of comments on your work if you're not actively involved in helping others as well.

Share the workload
If you're a 3D artist, don't be afraid to pair up with a 2D artist you respect. Play to your strengths, and be willing to work together and take feedback and critiques.

Bobby has worked for Warner Bros., Dreamworks and Sony's Imageworks and Animation divisions. He owns Imaginism Studios and teaches on Schoolism.com.

www.imaginismstudios.com

Continued from previous page...



When re-imagining your fairy tale, try to paint the opposite of what you'd expect to see in, say, a Disney cartoon.

website and both 2D and 3D entrants are invited to submit work. Bobby Chiu will then pick the winning entries. Prizes for the first, second and third placed artists in both the 2D and 3D categories include signed art and books, online workshops and software from leading artists, publishers and studios.

To get started, create a WIP thread in the Fairy Tales Re-Imagined Challenge forum with your entry type (2D or 3D), your name and title of your entry. You'll be using this thread to post your progress and WIP shots for the community to follow. When you've finished, post your entry to the finals thread in the Fairy Tales Re-Imagined Challenge forum with your final images and a link to your WIP thread.

Images should be suitable for print. CGHub will set up an FTP for hi-res entries nearer the deadline. WIP images should be posted in JPEG format while final images should be TIF or PSD, 300dpi landscape or portrait.

There are no limitations on what software can be used and artists can also collaborate on an entry – a 2D artist could design the work while a 3D modeller can bring it to life. "The only rule is the fairy tale you're re-making should be recognisable in your image," says Bobby, identifying there really should be no barrier to imaginative art. "Other than that, the sky's the limit!"

Send your entries and view other entries here: **cghub.com/blog/view/fairy-tales-re-imagined-challenge**.



ImagineFX goes Kapow!

Smash hit Team ImagineFX set up shop at the first Kapow! convention, and is already looking forward to a promising second helping

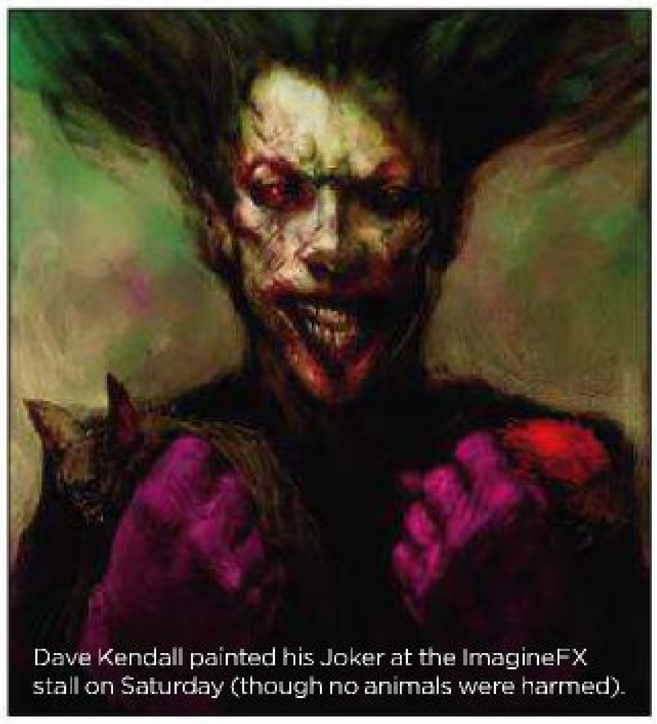
The first Kapow! comic-book convention kicked off in record-breaking style on 9 April at London's Business Design Centre.

Organised by Kick-Ass writer Mark Millar and his partner Lucy Unwin, the event opened with two Guinness World Records being made: the fastest production of a comic book (six hours), and the most contributors (60 people). "Ever since I was a kid I wanted to break a world record," says Mark, "and I knew I wasn't going to get it tap dancing or running, but comics is something I can do."

Sunday saw exclusive previews of Steven Spielberg's TV series Falling Skies, comic book signings from the likes of Simon Bisley and David Lloyd, and a colourful cosplay parade. Extra book signings were set up for Kick-Ass artist John Romita Jr, and Mark Millar and Dave Gibbons took to the IGM stage to talk about their as-yet untitled spy comic.

With the film previews and top art talent already being booked up for next year's Kapow!, this is a comic convention to keep your eye on.

Watch this space: **www.kapowcomiccon.com**.

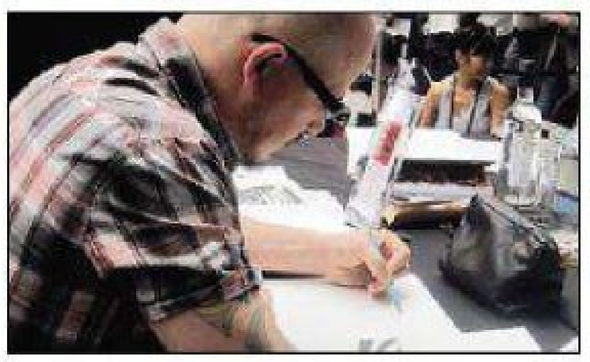


Dave Kendall painted his Joker at the ImagineFX stall on Saturday (though no animals were harmed).



Above, Manon painted this beast at our stall; right, the ImagineFX hard sale; and far right, some cosplay contestants await their stage appearance on Sunday.









Clockwise from top: record-breaking pressure; editor Claire Howlett meets Mark Millar; storm trooper alert!; cosplay parade; Duncan Fregredo and Liam Sharp.





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Learning concepts

Education Fancy a career in concept art? North-east England's Teesside University is offering a unique opportunity for a formal qualification

Less than a year after it launched, Teesside University's MA Concept Art for Games and Animation course is going from strength to strength – and attracting industry attention in the process.

"As far as I'm aware this is the only course of its type in the UK," says Nigel Kitching,



senior lecturer and an artist himself, having worked on Sonic the Comic and created concept art for various animation companies. Based in north-east England, the course offers the opportunity to develop the techniques involved with concept art, with a strong emphasis on drawing skills and the ability to interpret ideas, over a series of six different modules.

Artists from China, India, Greece, France and Kazakhstan, among many other countries, are enrolled on the one-year programme. "The course is amazing and I get inspired every day – I'm stuck on it," said Jialiang Tang, a Chinese student.

Shelley Page, Head of International Outreach at DreamWorks Animation, thinks the course is long overdue. "This provides a great opportunity for students to explore various areas of concept design, which aren't always covered in depth by more general courses," she says. "Artists who achieve standards of excellence in this area are among the most highly sought-after graduates in the animation and computer games industries."

Jack Couvela, an art director at Ubisoft Reflections who's on secondment to help out the students, is equally excited. "The students' enthusiasm is testament to a very engaging course," he says. "Regular guest lectures and briefs from industry keep it well informed and relevant."

We'll certainly be keeping an eye on the fortunes of the first graduates from this unusual course. If you're interested in enrolling or more info, see **bit.ly/6S41R2**, and for more of the student's art go to **www.mastersofconceptart.com**.

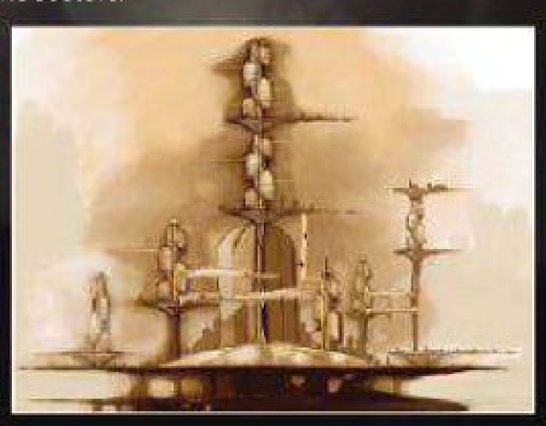


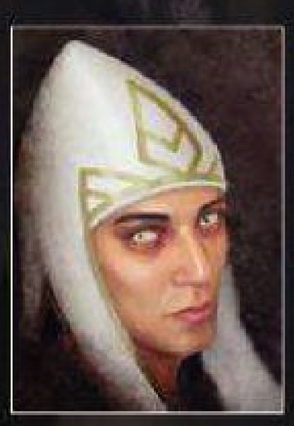


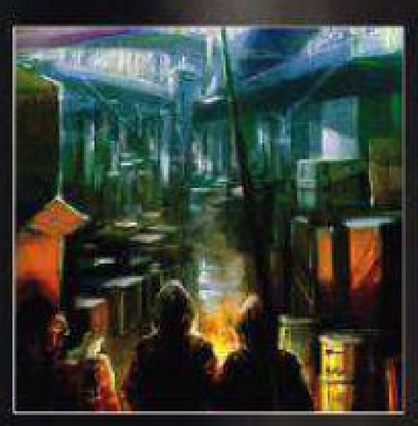
Just some of the art produced by students on Teeside University's one-year masters course in specific concept art techniques. Recipients of the innovative MA hope that it'll help them to break into the fiercely competitive films and game sectors.













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deviantART

+deviantWATCH

Here are some of the many gems we found on the pages of deviantART…



Sandara

sandara.deviantart.com

With a penchant for charismatic Griffins and serpentine dragons, this Singaporean artist's site is filled with action, speed and vast enveloping lands. From deft speed paints such as Misty Morning (pictured) to detailed compositions, it's the creature art that grabs the most attention.



Carolyn Gan

wredwrat.deviantart.com

One of the joys of surfing around deviantART is you come across pages filled with passionate fan art dedicated to favourite characters. This website is replete with the Nintendo DS Professor Layton character, and whether or not you know who he is, you'll love the skill and passion on show here.



Jana Schirmer

janaschi.deviantart.com

This is the home to many of Jana's Magic: The Gathering cards, but there's also a sprinkling of disarmingly personal pieces to be found. Speed paints and live stream pieces abound, but it's her loving depictions of women that demand the most attention, such as this one pictured, entitled Eggs.



Life is Humiliation

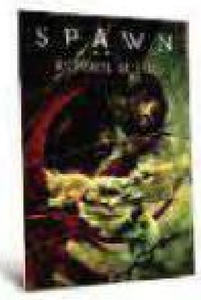
by Matt Boyce



Fantasy talk Explaining the inexplicable

"It's certainly not the classiest thing I've done, but I still get a damn good laugh every time I see it posted somewhere"

Marco Mazzoni's Sexual Predator image is the debauched gift that keeps on giving… *See page 58*



Spawn again

Revival Aleksi Briclot continues to shape the devilish world of Todd McFarlane's brainchild Spawn with a new release

French artist Aleksi Briclot may have recently finished the Spawn: Architects of Fear comic, but his affiliation with the title's creators goes way back.



He first met Spawn's writer, Arthur Clare, on one of his first jobs, an official Hellboy project. Still at school, he then met the French editor of Spawn, Thierry Mornet. After displaying his skills, Aleksi was asked to provide the art for the Spawn: Simony graphic novel. "That book was the best selling trade paperback the month of its release in 2003," he says.

For Aleksi, the appeal of depicting Spawn is simple: "It's about creating some horrific, frightening and impressive visions and situations, and making it believable."

Go to **www.imaginefx.com/spawn-arch** to see loads more exclusive Spawn: Architects of Fear art, and an interview with Spawn creator Todd McFarlane.

Aleksi's detailed art style is a good match for the dark, foreboding Spawn storyline.



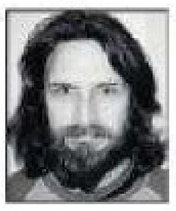
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Be afraid...

Shooter Day 1 Studios artist Mitch Cotie takes us through the variety of working on the F.E.A.R. 3 game

Although Mitch Cotie was initially asked to "help out with textures" on the game art

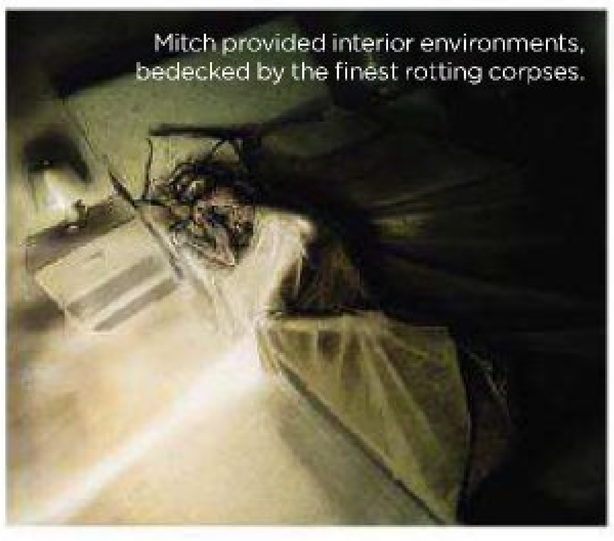


for F.E.A.R. 3 (due for release 27 May), he quickly found himself providing concept art for a range of the game's characters and environments. "The F.E.A.R. 3 team needed a helping hand on concept art, so I filled in," he says.

Mitch was soon asked to create creature designs and even found himself contemplating the mindset of the game's killer characters.

"I was allowed to go crazy with the creature concepts, but the strangest part was getting into the minds of the cultists," he recalls, "to make all those blood wall scrawlings... I think I may be a little screwed up after that task!"

To see more of Mitch's art, head here: **www.mcotie.com**.



Mitch provided interior environments, bedecked by the finest rotting corpses.



This is one of the first F.E.A.R. 3. creature concepts that Mitch came up with.



"I think the Family Portrait was the first painting I did for the game," recalls Mitch of his early days working for Day 1 Studios on the upcoming F.E.A.R. 3.

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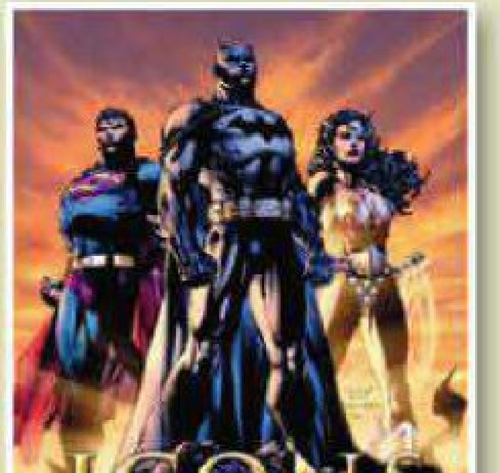
fineartprint.com

In short...

The latest news in brief for digital artists



Plug Steam powered
Steambot Studios has made a short sci-fi film called Plug, out this September, accompanied by a 48-page 'Art of…' book, written and directed by concept artist David Levy. See more here: **www.steambotstudios.com**.



Books Happy Lee
Icons: The DC Comics and Wildstorm Art of Jim Lee showcases… well, you can probably guess, but it's a cracking book anyway – and you can check out a video flick-through of it at **bit.ly/evcQe4**. Then see more of Jim's art in ImagineFX's issue 67's special Sketchbook article.



Short film Star letter
A ten-day shoot followed by a year in post-production has culminated in The 3rd Letter, which marks artist Grzegorz Jonkajtys' leap from illustrating to creating film. He also stars in the futuristic dystopian short. Check it the fruits of his labour here: **www.marauderfilm.com/the3rdletter**.

Even California-approved art products can prove hazardous in the long run. I think I've minimised the risk with this air filter.

Music and audiobooks can aid my concentration. I keep my music library and my reference files on here.

I alternate from watercolour to oil depending on the project, and find that a table which can switch from table to easel is very useful.



Brushes that vary from pristine sables to horrifically murdered bristles. I save them all because you never know when you'll need some villainous, old, chunky bristle brush.

ImagineFX Artist in Residence

Justin Gerard

Clean slate Justin has high hopes for his latest studio rejig – designed with order in mind. But how long will the tidiness last…?



My studio is usually to be found in a state of profound squalor, an ungovernable chaos navigable only by careful, ninja-like springs from one bare patch of floor to another. However, I've just re-organised it, so you see it now in its original, sterile state.

I undertook this re-organisation for two reasons. First, to take better advantage of the window, which faces northwest and offers great natural light for most of the day, so I don't have to monkey with lights as much.

Second, I wanted to move my work computer to a spot in another room (that room being the kitchen, and that spot being right beside the refrigerator). With the previous arrangement, I had the work computer in the studio, and I found that my attention was always being pulled away from

Some books get used more than others. The ones that I'm most likely to pull off the shelves in the middle of a project I keep on the bookshelf directly beside the table.



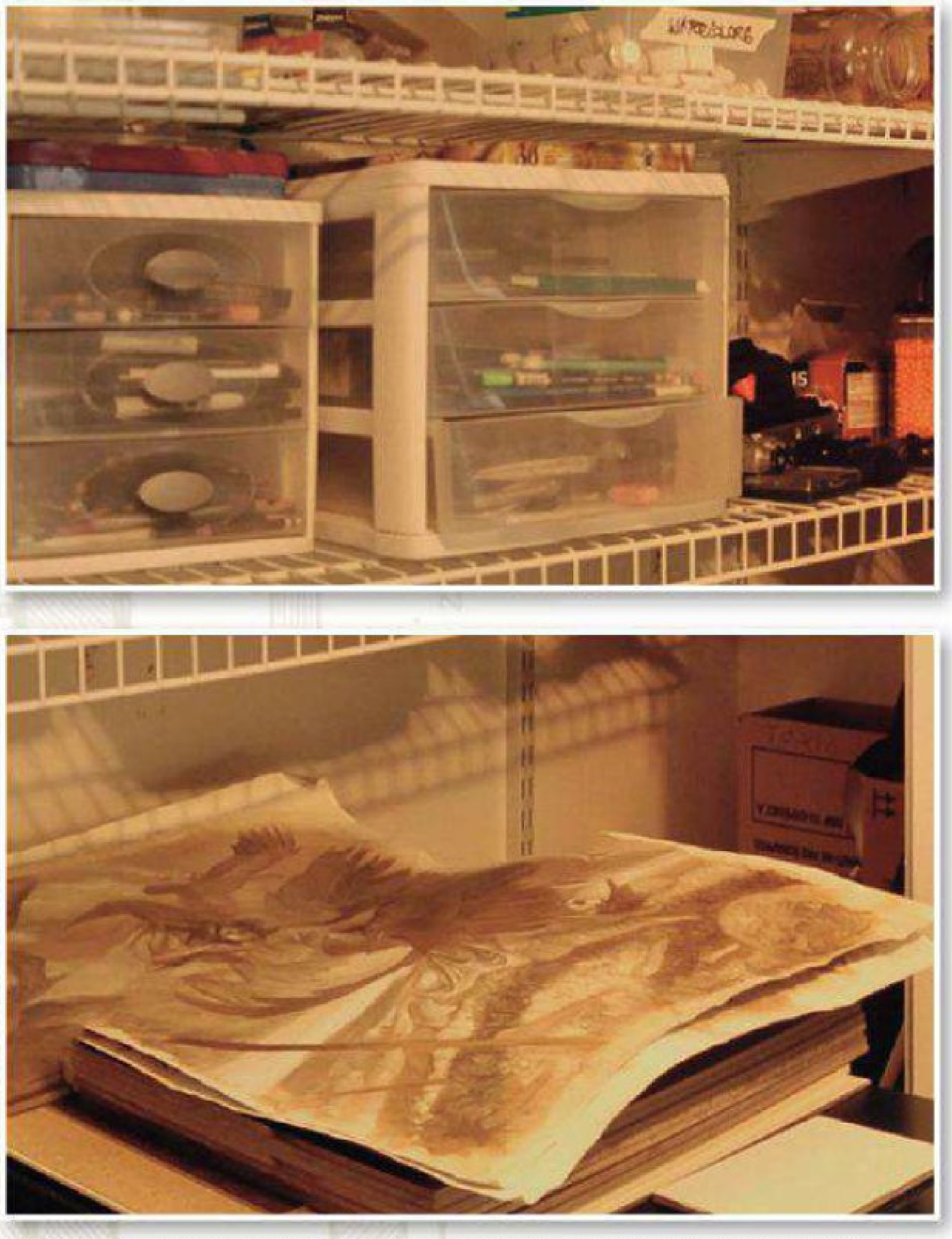
my work by emails and messages and the perpetual static of the internet. Keeping out as much distraction as possible ensures that I can have more periods of unbroken concentration while I work.

This principle of freedom from distraction is the modus operandi of how I've tried to set the studio up. I don't necessarily need it to be a deserted tropical island, nor a fortified command bunker, but I do want to organise everything so that I don't have to think about it and can concentrate on the work, and not on getting up and running around the house looking for stuff.

The organisation probably won't last very long. It'll be buried in papers in a week. But the basic core setup will persist and help me stay focused, even if it does turn into a wasteland of paper and failed paintings.

Justin works as the art director for Portland Studios Inc., as well as on private commissions and personal projects. See www.justingerard.com for more of his art.

Some painting techniques demand the use of some nasty chemicals. During my re-organisation I removed the doors from the closet for easier access. It's difficult to hide skeletons in closets with no doors. So now I keep all the chemicals in the laundry room, which is totally safe. I mean, who uses a laundry room, right?



On some paintings, particularly those where I'm wrestling with hard-to-solve visual problems, I'll do small, quick experiments to try out different mediums, techniques or colour schemes before putting them down on the piece that I'm working on.



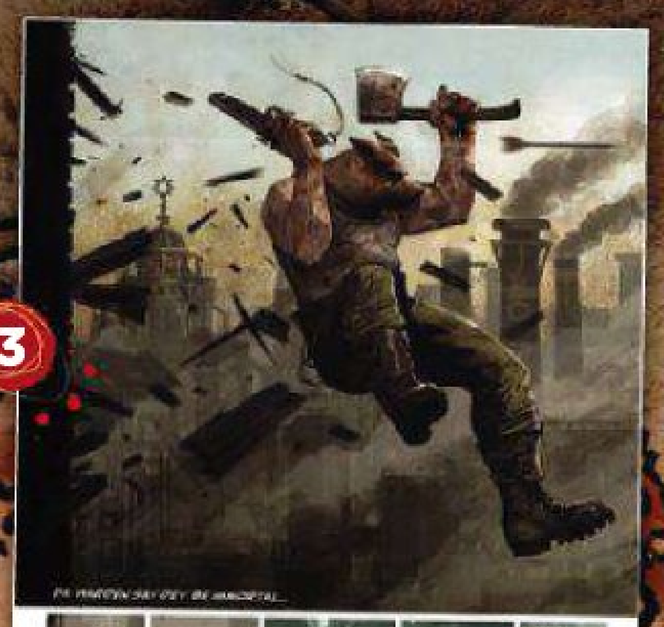
A gladius: great for metal and filigree reference, and for discouraging distractions from breaking in.

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PLANET OF THE ARTS









HERE'S A RUNDOWN OF THE EVENTS AND ART BLOGS THAT HAVE GOT US IN A STIR THIS MONTH. IF YOU'VE GOT A STORY OR EVENT THAT SHOULD BE FEATURED HERE, SEND US THE DETAILS: **PLANET@IMAGINEFX.COM**. CHEERS!

Beren

Beren Neale, Staff Writer

ZEN WANG
Illustrator | US

1 Zen is a concept artist working in LA. His blog is a superb mixture of project work, personal pieces and more, ranging from sci-fi to peaceful pastoral scenes. Nice.
zenisdrawing.blogspot.com

BILL CARMAN
Illustrator | US

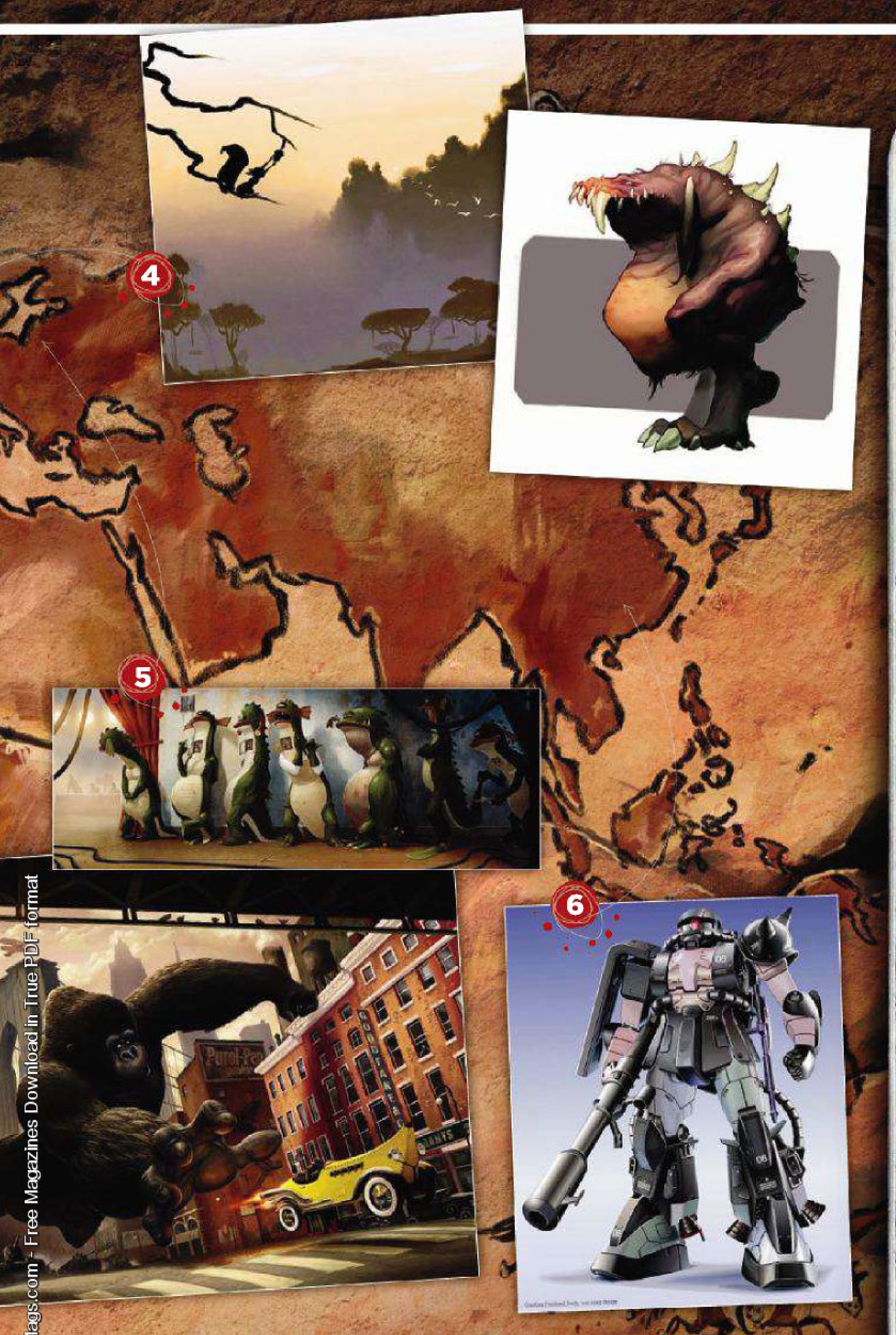
2 Bill is an illustrator, designer and professor with an impressive list of clients, and his blog makes for endlessly fascinating viewing. His art is as eclectic as his history.
billcarman.blogspot.com

JOHN MUELLER
Illustrator | US

3 Renowned artist John is digitally remastering his mid-90s graphic novel Oink: Heaven's Butcher. He's also adding new characters and storylines. Follow the process here.
www.bigpigink.blogspot.com

SJAN WEIJERS
Illustrator | The Netherlands

4 Sjan loves '50s-style cartoons, as evidenced by the wealth of them on her blog. But now and then she has an urge to create "shouting muscular men". The results are interesting.
amphibiousrodent.blogspot.com



4

5

6

SZYMON BIERNACKI

Concept artist | Poland

5 A wonderful mesh of digital and traditional art, from pieces inspired by Sherlock Holmes to a CGSociety tutorial on creating award-winning illustration Auditions.

lordbiernac.blogspot.com

WEI MING

Concept artist | China

6 Plenty of impressive heavy-duty 3D work here. But there's also a selection of concept art, sketches and more from this Chinese artist who revels in creating sci-fi settings.

www.allenwei.com

Map art by Jonny Duddle, www.duddleburg.com

SKETCH JAM

Meet-ups in Cardiff and the odd excursion to Bristol provide inspiration for this UK group



Illustrious

LOCATION: Cardiff Arts Institute, weekend trips to Bristol Museum
WHEN: Odd Tuesdays at CAI
EMAIL: ohdeardisaster@yahoo.com



Although the core of the sketch group is based in Cardiff, they also organise weekend trips to Bristol.

Inspired by his fellow Cardiff residents, Peter Kan sketched these alien concepts.





William Lake created this portrait, while. Ceinwen Jackson developed a series of horses (below).



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Part 6 These ones go to eleven

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These ones go up to eleven.

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There's even more to the Dell Precision M4600 and M6600 than incredible performance. NVIDIA Optimus knows when you need high-end performance and delivers it effortlessly, switching to energy-saving mode when you don't need full power, and AMD Eyefinity technology can support up to five displays when docked. There's an extensive range of connection options too, including DisplayPort, USB 3.0, VGA, HDMI and eSATA.

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Every Dell Precision mobile workstation can be configured with enormous storage capacities - up to 1.5TB in the Dell Precision M6600 - enabling you to carry all your digital assets with you, and you can mix and match traditional hard disks with super-fast solid state storage to boost performance without skimping on storage space. Optional FIPS certified encryption can keep your data secure, and of course RAID storage is available too. Easy access removable hard disks make it easy to swap between multiple drives, and the Fast Response Free Fall Sensor provides superb data protection in the event of a fall or drop.

We've made big improvements to the little things, too. Built-in array microphones benefit from Acoustic Echo Cancellation for headset-free VoIP and videoconferencing. "Beam Forming" algorithms focus on your voice even in noisy environments, while the optional, light sensitive Dell Webcam delivers true HD pictures and video. There's also an optional backlit keyboard that enables you to keep on working in low-light environments.

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We designed our Precision mobile workstations for professionals who demand the utmost

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Image © iStockphoto

Good advice

Find the perfect creative partner without scanning the spec sheets

Dell's build-to-order philosophy means you can design your own system down to individual components, creating a machine that's as unique as you are - and if you'd rather skip the spec sheets, the Dell Precision Workstation Advisor can do the designing for you. By telling the advisor what you do and what applications you prefer, it can help you choose the perfect Dell Precision.

The Dell Precision Workstation Advisor bases its advice on what you actually do, so the first thing it needs to know is the industry you work in and the type of work you do. For example, under Media and Entertainment you can choose from 2D and 3D character animation and rendering, multimedia authoring, professional audio production and so on. Once you've answered that, the Advisor will ask what application you use the most, and whether you use any other demanding applications alongside it. A few more questions - desktop or mobile? Do you prefer a particular graphics system? - and the Advisor creates two configurations for you: a mainstream option and an advanced one. That gives you all the details you need to create the perfect Dell Precision, and you can export to PDF for easy reference. The whole process takes less than a minute.

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strength and reliability. We've invested hundreds of engineering man-hours and conducted intensive testing to optimise the performance and reliability our workstations in the applications you depend on, ensuring that you get peak performance and rock-solid reliability all day, every day.

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NEW! Dell Precision M4600

The world's most powerful 15" mobile workstation with the latest, second generation Intel® Core™ i processors.

Astonishing performance

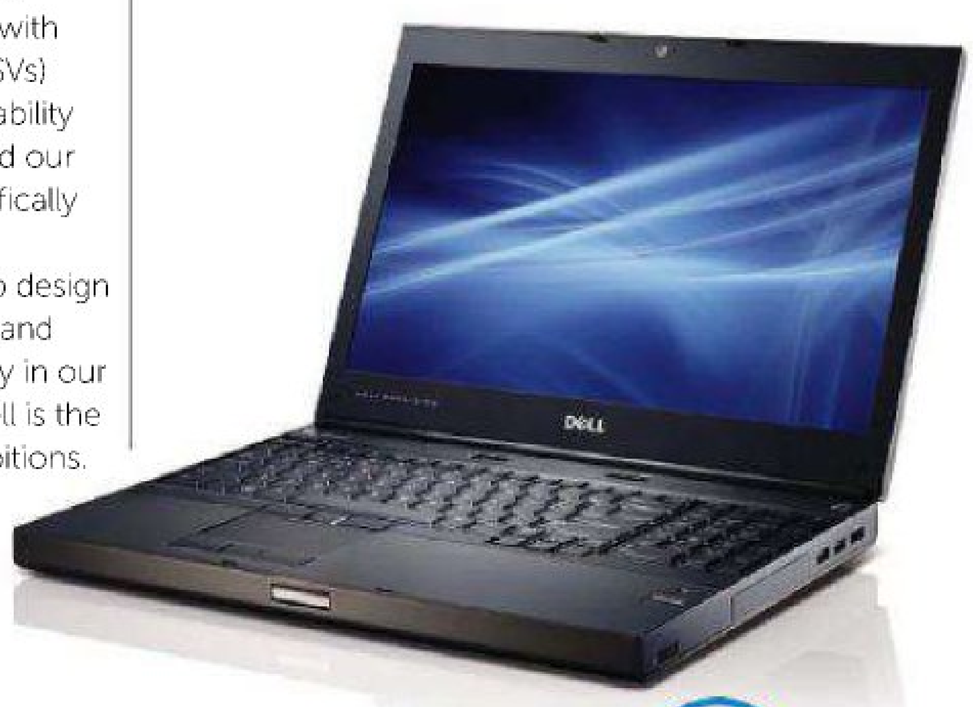
The Dell Precision M4600 is powered by the very latest Intel® Core™ i processors, Processor options include the blisteringly fast i7-2920XM Extreme Edition. With high bandwidth DDR3 RAM and AMD® or NVIDIA® graphics with up to 2GB of dedicated memory and multi-monitor support it delivers workstation performance in a sleek, portable package.

Massive scalability

The Dell Precision M6600 has the capacity to match its raw performance. With support for four DIMM slots it's good for 32GB of RAM, and its two dedicated drive bays and additional SSD mini-card scale beyond 1 Terabyte - and they can be configured in RAID 0 or 1 mode for high performance and redundancy.

Extreme mobility

It's the little details that make the Dell Precision M4600 such a mobile marvel. The option to spec a backlit keyboard for low-light conditions. The HD, anti-glare, 100% Adobe RGB screen that's crisp and clear in any environment. The optional stylus and multi-touch support. ExpressChargeTM rapid charging and exceptional battery life. The extensive range of 3G mobile broadband, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi connectivity. Compatibility with the full range of Dell E-Family accessories. Designed for the most challenging tasks, the Dell Precision M4600 is as flexible as you are.



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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX Forum

Winners

Image of the month

Gnome Alone An intriguing character caught in an intriguing pose – who said supernatural burglary wasn't cool?





Liz put a lot of thought into making the unusual composition of this image work.

For Liz Clarke, the first thing to get done in her Forum challenge entry was the composition. "I wanted to show the gnome from a low angle and chose a tall, narrow canvas with the gnome positioned in the upper half," she says. "I tilted the horizon for interest and to avoid dividing the image up too evenly." Liz started painting in greyscale to make the most of the night-time setting and strong torchlight.

She then used reference photos of people hanging upside down to perfect the face. "The great thing for a burglar this size is he can go about his thieving without the owners even knowing," says Liz.

MYFX TITLE: Gnome Alone
WINNER: Liz Clarke (lizclarke)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/lizclarke

FORUM CRIT



"I think this is a great interpretation of the brief and the action pose really adds a lot to the character. The lighting is great with the added touch of the torch, and I love the colour palette. It keeps my attention."
Leigh Sparks (Lunar)

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MYFX TITLE: The Deadly Sin
WINNER: Ian Core (g8crasherboy)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/g8crasherboy



"I did some research around the original sins in order to find an unorthodox interpretation of the theme. Asmodeus is a demon who represents lust so it gave me a great opportunity to try my hand at painting a heavy metal album cover."



MYFX TITLE: Snow Hunt
WINNER: Lori Andrews (hobbyhorse)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/hobbyhorse

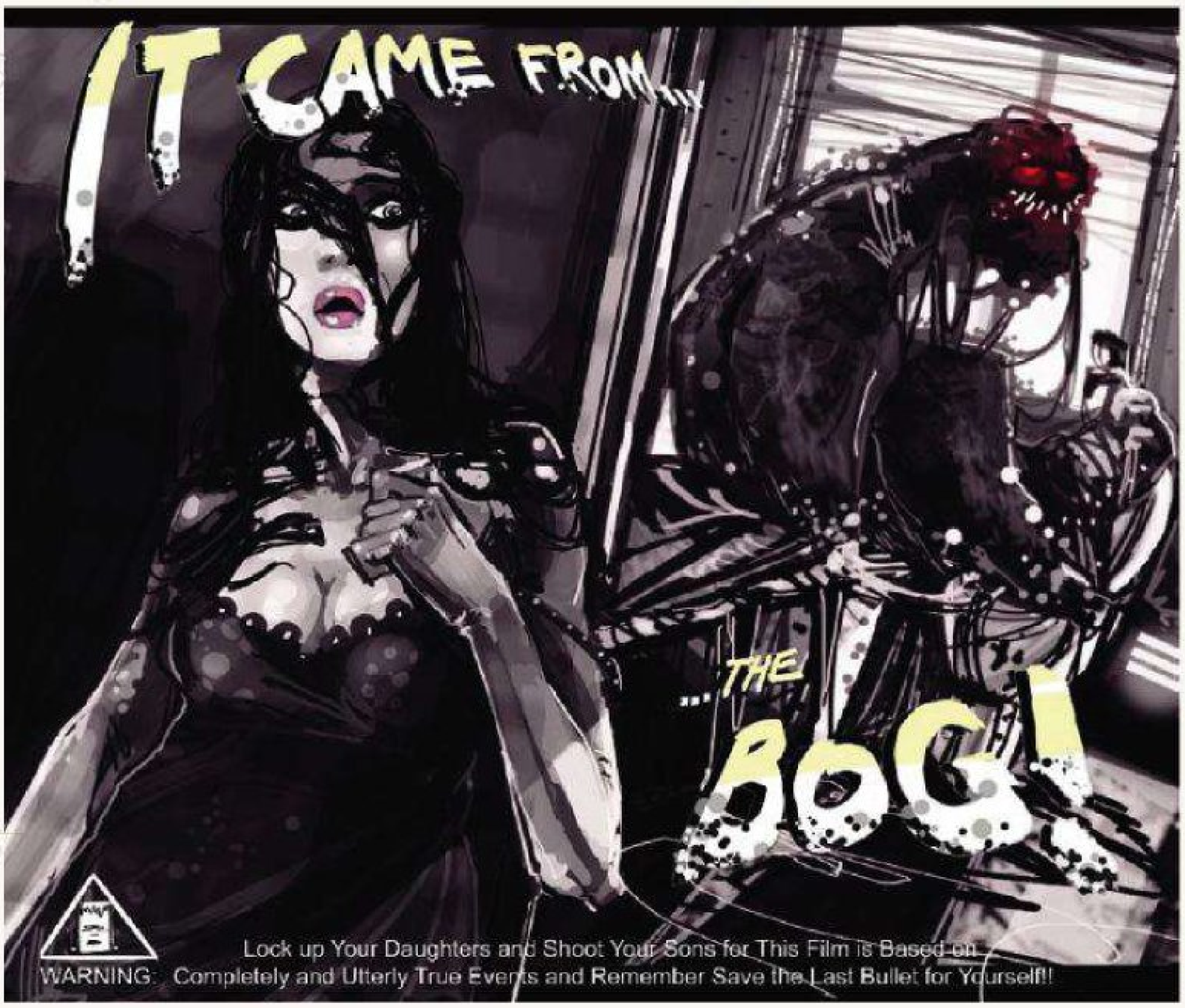


"Work has been hectic, but when I saw the title and read the brief, an image came to mind immediately and I had it sketched out in minutes. I used a few tools in Photoshop that I hadn't used yet and got more familiar with others. Because of the time frame there's still work that needs to be done, but I liked doing this action piece and I will work to improve its flow."

MYFX TITLE: It Came From...
WINNER: Matt G (Disco Matt)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/disco_matt



"I really enjoyed this challenge because I wanted to do a piece where some bog monster is scaring some hot girl for a while now. So when I saw the title I thought, 'Yes!' The monster just sort of developed really as I went along, so I was quite happy with its goofy face and the girl's 'I don't even wanna look in there!' expression. To be honest, I'm just glad it ended up looking something like what I had in my head!"





MYFX TITLE: Mining Mechs
WINNER: Juan Blanco (guang)
GALLERY: www.imaginefx.com/guang



"I had fun creating something for the red planet – I know the colours played a big part in selling that idea to the viewer. I'm extremely happy with the way it turned out."

Letters

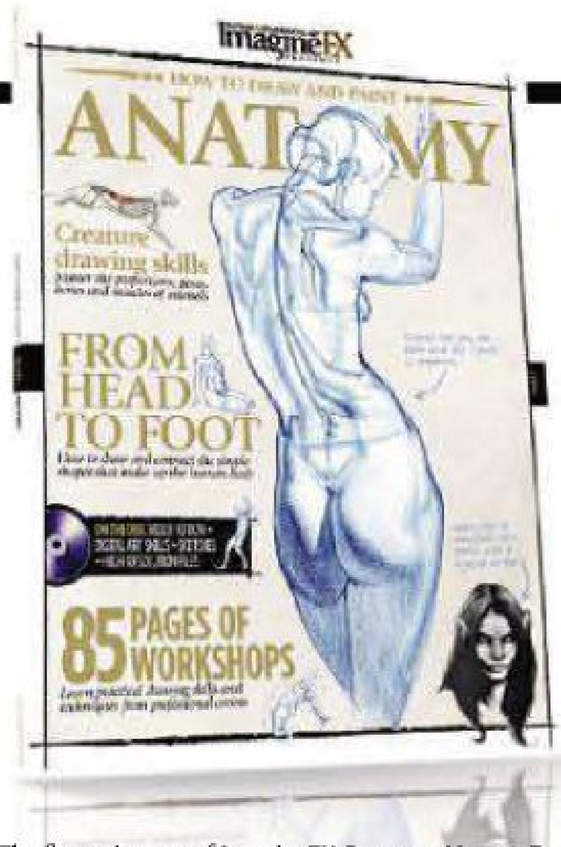
YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on claire@imaginefx.com or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW, UK

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Tell us your thoughts on: www.facebook.com/imaginefx



The first print run of ImagineFX Presents: How to Draw and Paint Anatomy flew off the shelves, but the reprint should still be available if you have a hunt around.

Claire replies The first version of the Anatomy edition sold out, which is why we reprinted it in February. I don't think this reprint will have sold out just yet, although it's proving to be popular. It might be worth phoning WHSmith to see if it's in stock near you. It's also available to buy from our website at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk/design. Overseas readers can find it at Eason, Martin McColl, Barnes & Noble, Micro Center and Borders.

Credit where credit's due



J's right, we should've credited Edward Jacobs whose unique designs influenced this image.

Tim Anderson's project in issue 67's Development Sheet was interesting to read and look through, and I enjoyed it. However, I was surprised to see Tim's development sketches and his final choice on page 58. It looks like a slightly stretched promo photo of the Confederate Wraith with minor detail changes.

The article makes it seem as if the barely manipulated photo of the Wraith was made through a design process. Tim's final model on page 59 is cool and he took the Wraith and did his own version. Yet the selected motorcycle on page 58 is a unique design. There's only one and nothing in the motorcycle world is similar. It's a Confederate. The designer is Edward Jacobs.

Influences are, of course, a part of design and development. However, if someone is doing a straight homage, they should give credit. Especially with unique, inspiring pieces of art such as Confederate Motors' Edward Jacobs' designs and builds.

Thank you, I enjoy your magazine and look forward to every issue.

J Dee, via email

Claire replies Hello J. As you're aware, the Development Sheet feature usually depicts artists using references from various sources to help them come up with their own concept. While Tim does make it clear that he's using reference images to help concept his piece, I do concede we should have properly credited the images that he used for his thumbnails. Thanks for bringing this to my attention.

Quick Anatomy question…

Did your Anatomy special edition (ImagineFX Presents: How to Draw and Paint Anatomy, Volume 1) sell out before it hit the newsstands of WHSmiths? I wouldn't be surprised if it did. It looked stonkingly good!

Stropp, via email



DID YOU MISS ISSUE 69?

We've still got a few copies, but you need to move fast! See page 55 for details on how to get hold of a copy.

Choosing an art package

I've only recently started buying your magazine and I have to say it's fantastic! I'm studying illustration at the City of Glasgow College. One day during my lunch break I went to the local WHSmith and as soon as I saw Adam Hughes's work on the cover of ImagineFX I had to buy it. And after reading it I'm glad I made the right choice.

I've recently decided to make the huge leap from traditional drawing with pen and paper to using a graphic tablet and computer, and was wondering if you could answer a couple of questions for me. At college I use either Adobe Photoshop or Illustrator, which are amazing programs but also very expensive! As a cheaper alternative for home use, my lecturer suggested I look into Corel Painter 11? Would this be a better program for a beginner?

And just before I finish, I bought the How to Draw and Paint Anatomy issue yesterday and I'm that impressed I'm thinking about getting a subscription to your magazine. Thanks and keep up the good work!

Darren Brown, via email

Claire replies Hello Darren, welcome to digital art! I'm not sure what your budget is, but I would suggest playing around with trial versions of both Painter and ArtRage so you can see how each one works. You can do much more with Painter, but its higher price reflects that. I recommend you install the trials from our DVD and have a play around to see what suits your requirements right now.



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Missing the DVD

First off I need to say that I love ImagineFX. It's informative, packed full of tips and ideas, beautifully laid out and simply awesome.

I've bought your magazine now for over three years and have recently moved over to the digital version. I do prefer the paper copy, but I'm moving to the USA for 18 months and simply couldn't carry 18 months of paper copies around with me. My iPad is much lighter! I was reluctant because I knew I'd no longer have the DVD, but thought I could live without it. As it turns out, I can't. I'm missing so much valuable content!

What can I do – can you help? I can't afford to buy the paper copy and bin it just for the disc, plus it's not very environmentally friendly (and working for the Eden Project as I do, not a very good example of being green). I know us digital users get a bit of cash knocked off because we're not paying for the print cost, but I feel that being able to download the DVD content would be fair. What do you think? All the best and keep up the fantastic work.

Chris Knowles, via email

Claire replies Hello Chris, sadly we're not able to securely provide a downloadable version of the DVD for our digital subscribers. Even if we could, there would be bandwidth issues with some of our readers for such a large amount of data. The only way to get the disc is to buy the print version. Sorry we can't help. Thanks for your kind words about the magazine, though.



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RISING STARS 2011

Continuing the success of last year's Rising Stars 2010 showcase, we're at it again. This issue we're launching the ImagineFX Rising Stars 2011 campaign to discover, promote and celebrate the best of today's young sci-fi and fantasy artists and illustrators, whether digital or traditionally based, from around the world.

The Rising Stars 2011 event is the opportunity for all artists aged 25 or under to showcase their art. Our aim is to champion artists and the art community, and the Rising Stars event is our way to shine a light on new and emerging talent.

We've teamed up with some of the leading art directors from the film, video games and book industries to help the cause. Our team of independent judges include Blizzard's art director Sam Didier, Wizards of the Coast's Jon Schindehette and Framestore's Kevin Jenkins.

Whether you're a full-time artist, a student or just want to show off your work, we want to hear from you. International entrants are welcome and there's no charge for entry. The 10 best entrants will be featured in issue 75 of ImagineFX, on sale 20 September in the UK, and three weeks later in the US and overseas.

CALL FOR ENTRIES

Do you have what it takes to impress the judges and stand out from the crowd? Then enter this year's Rising Stars campaign and make your bid for stardom!

SEND IN YOUR ART

Entrants are invited to submit five digital or traditional pieces of portfolio work and a short biography. The deadline for all entries is 1 August 2011. Please don't send original works and make sure that you have copies to spare of anything submitted.

You can post your submission on a CD to:

Rising Stars 2011
ImagineFX
30 Monmouth Street
Bath
BA1 2BW
UK

For more information about competition, please visit **www.imaginefx.com/risingstars**.

THE RULES

1. Employees of Future Publishing Ltd, and their immediate families or agents are not eligible to enter this competition.
2. Only one entry per person. Multiple entries will be discarded.
3. Entrants must be aged 25 or under on 1 August 2011.
4. Entries must be received by 1 August 2011, which is the closing date.
5. All entries will be judged by the ImagineFX team and an independent panel (see list). Their decision is final.
6. The winners must agree to allow their images to be used in ImagineFX and in any promotional or marketing material.
7. ImagineFX and Future Publishing reserve the right to postpone the selection of the winners indefinitely if the standard of quality is not to the required level.
8. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence will be entered into. Unfortunately we are unable to return the CDs or DVDs containing your artwork.
9. All information is correct at the time of going to press.





Some of the winners from last year's Rising Stars campaign. Send in your art and your work could be showcased to a world-wide audience.

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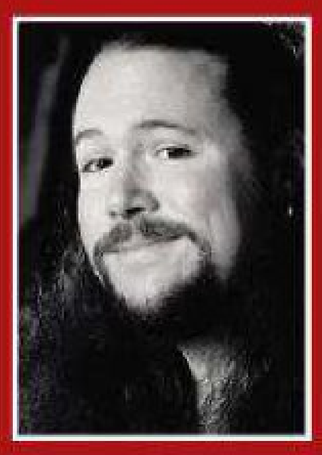
THE PANEL



IRENE GALLO

As art director at Tor Books since 1994, Irene helps to develop talented new artists as well as work with some of the world's leading illustrators. She also sits on the board of directors of the Society of Illustrators and runs regular painting demos with Dan Dos Santos at theArtDepartment blog. Irene is a perfect judge of any rising star.

www.tor.com



SAM DIDIER

Art director Sam is one of Blizzard's longest-serving employees and his art has been the building blocks of many of the developer's big games. With a track record of spotting new artists on the Blizzard forums and turning them into pros, there's no better way to get into the video games industry than getting your work seen by Sam.

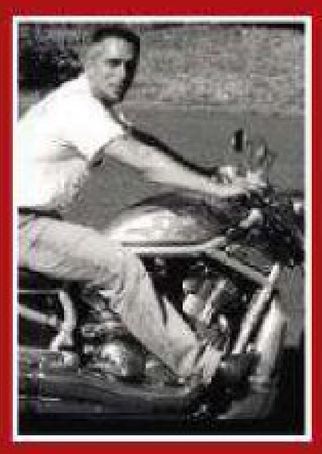
www.blizzard.com



KEVIN JENKINS

The director of Framestore's recently created art department has an impressive CV, not least for his hand in its BAFTA- and Oscar-nominated VFX work. Framestore is one of the world's most successful VFX studios, and concept art is playing a big part in this. If you want to break into this film industry, impressing Kevin is a great way to start.

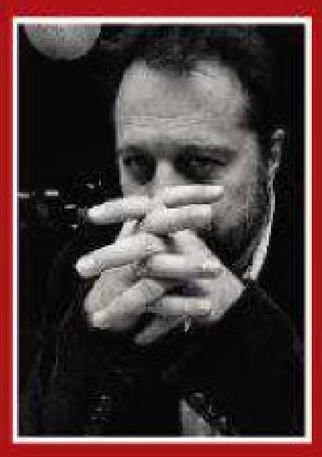
www.framestore-cfc.com



JON SCHINDEHETTE

Senior art director for Wizards of the Coast, Jon Schindehette ensures the art direction across all of Dungeons & Dragons projects fits together. Some task! Yet he still finds time to champion fantasy art and artists at every level. He's a great supporter of the art community and his blog, ArtOrder, is required reading for all aspiring artists.

www.wizards.com/dnd



MARK CHIARELLO

As art director at DC Comics, Mark Chiarello sees a lot of new artists work and has plenty of experience championing rising stars of the comic industry. Before DC, Mark worked at Marvel and even spent time as an illustrator for DisneyWorld immediately after graduating from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn. Believe us, he's done the hard graft.

www.dccomics.com

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RISING STARS 2011



THE PERFECT

Now that your art skills are up to scratch, follow our guide to crafting a portfolio that'll wow art directors everywhere...

You've put in the hours. Done the hard work. Now, finally, you've created a body of work that you're proud of and you're ready to make those who matter sit up and take notice.

There are two types of portfolio that every artist should have: a physical book of some sort and an online presence. In today's digital world the latter is preferred by most, but some art directors are still keen on a printed portfolio.

A slick digital portfolio is a must, and is easy to set up using a variety of web-based services (see overleaf). Most art directors will get their first view of your work online, so having a site that's fast to load and not over-complicated is a must.



Kevin Jenkins, art director at VFX house Framestore, concurs: "No Flash websites. Keep it simple and make sure it's large enough to view at a reasonable size. If it's too small, I can't see what the work is like." If you're thinking of sending a disc for an art director to view, Kevin continues, "make sure they work. I can't tell you the number of portfolios I've never followed up because the disc won't load."

> **"No Flash websites. Keep it simple and make sure it's large enough to view at a reasonable size. If it's too small, I can't see what the work is like"** **Kevin Jenkins**



Similarly, if you're going to have a printed portfolio, do it properly. As seminal artist William Stout – a man whose 40-year career has seen him work for everyone from ILM to Disney – explains: "Presentation, presentation, presentation. I've been handed random, creased bits of smudged paper with pencil drawings – not even finished pencil drawings. Be professional! If you're not presenting your art in a sleeved portfolio book, then at least matte the art that you're presenting with nice mattes and replace them if they get dirty." Even if you're the next Frazetta, an art director isn't going to be impressed with your work if you don't put effort into the presentation.



Jon Schindehette, art director at Wizards of the Coast, has this to say: "A good portfolio should show a selected series of pieces that showcase the following aspects of your work: consistent quality; consistent styles;

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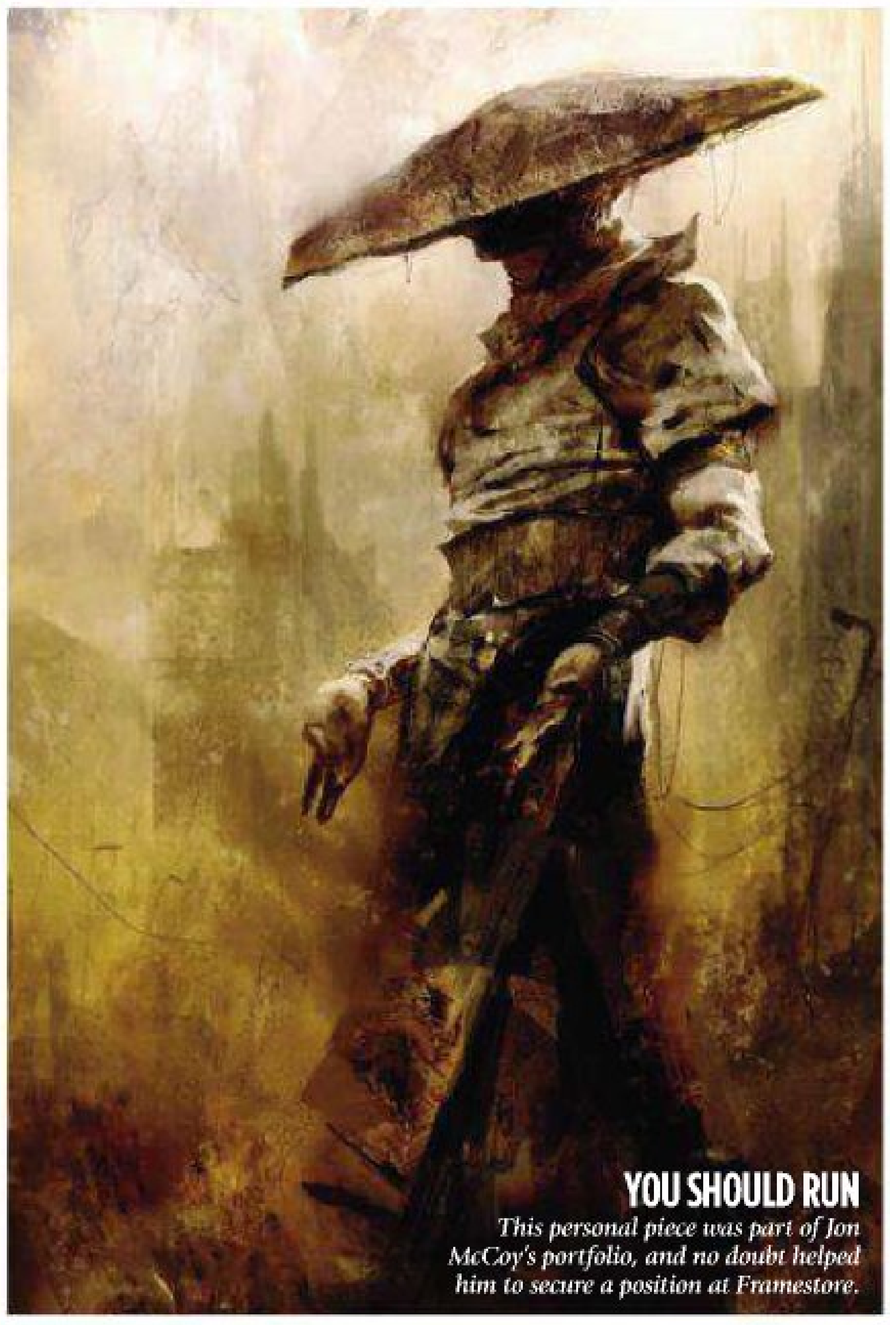
About to hand in your portfolio? Read this first!

DO...

- ...think of your portfolio as your principal marketing device. After all, its purpose is to show people what you have to offer in terms of skill and imagination.
- ...consider the viewer of the portfolio when choosing content. Everyone likes to feel special – even art directors.
- ...assess the flow and presentation of your pieces. Think of your printed and online portfolio as a story of your talent – or at least its best bits.
- ...replace worn images or pages. There's nothing worse than seeing a poorly printed portfolio.
- ...show off work that has ideas – preferably your own. It shows you're more than just a hand; it shows that you can also think and potentially function for your client as a problem-solver, too.
- ...include pieces that exhibit your traditional drawing skills. They will strike a chord with the art director, believe us.

DON'T...

- ...show everything you've ever painted. Art directors are short on time, so edit your work.
- ...use the same portfolio you built for Portfolio Class 101. Keep it fresh and up to date.
- ...forget that your winning personality can't possibly overcome a weak portfolio.
- ...lose sight of the fact that your portfolio is only as good as your worst piece – so don't include any bad work!
- ...explain any of your work unless the client asks you to. Your work should speak for itself, and you also want to avoid being either intrusive or too eager.
- ...make any excuses for your work. If a piece isn't up to scratch – no matter what the reason – then it shouldn't be in your portfolio.



YOU SHOULD RUN

This personal piece was part of Jon McCoy's portfolio, and no doubt helped him to secure a position at Framestore.

consistent technique; knowledge of the genre; the ability to tell a story, or execute concepts; to create an emotional reaction; and it has to be memorable – to stand out from the sea of portfolios."

Jason Manley, founder of The Art Department (**www.theartdepartment.org**)



agrees: "A portfolio demonstrates work ethic, personal interests, influences, persistence, perseverance, problem solving skills, storytelling – the works. The secret isn't in the sauce, the spoons or the ingredients. It's all about hard work, focus and building a portfolio with intent in mind."

So, your portfolio is a glimpse into your creative soul. It should not only reflect your painting skills, but also your personality and ambition as an artist. Yet, as Jon puts it, "A winning personality can't overcome a weak portfolio."

If there's a key rule to portfolios – at least the printed variety – it's don't include everything you've ever done. William is particularly vocal on this. "Don't show too much stuff," he explains. "Anyone with brains and taste can tell if you've got talent from seeing 12 pieces or less. Please don't ever show more than 20 pieces." The fact is, too many pieces act as a distraction; even if they're all what you'd consider key pieces, they never are. Be subjective and honest, and remove any pieces you feel are slightly weaker or don't fit in with the art director's needs.

Jason elaborates: "Don't show work that isn't your best. Do fix your work, go over it and even redo it if you need to. If you see something wrong with an image you did a year ago and still have it in your portfolio, then fix it. Always look for ways to upgrade your portfolio and move it in the direction you want to go with your work and career. Show images that nail the vibe you know the client appreciates, and include some pieces that show your range in other areas. You never know what a client may be looking for, so be sure you show your best works, even if some of them are sketchbook pages or other media."

Tweaking your portfolio for who you're sending it to is also of utmost importance. "Artists should tailor the portfolio to the market and for the purpose the targeted client needs," says Jason. "Applying to a studio that does fantasy projects only? Send them fantasy art, or imaginative works. Not fan art, mind you, but work that shows you know the genre inside and out. If you have a portfolio for one thing, it may not be good for another. It's always best to show work that shows you can do the exact job. Target your portfolios."

> **"Look for ways to upgrade your portfolio and move it in the direction you want to go with your career" Jason Manley**



You can use Apple's iPad as an ideal way to make your portfolio portable, as Loic Zimmermann does.

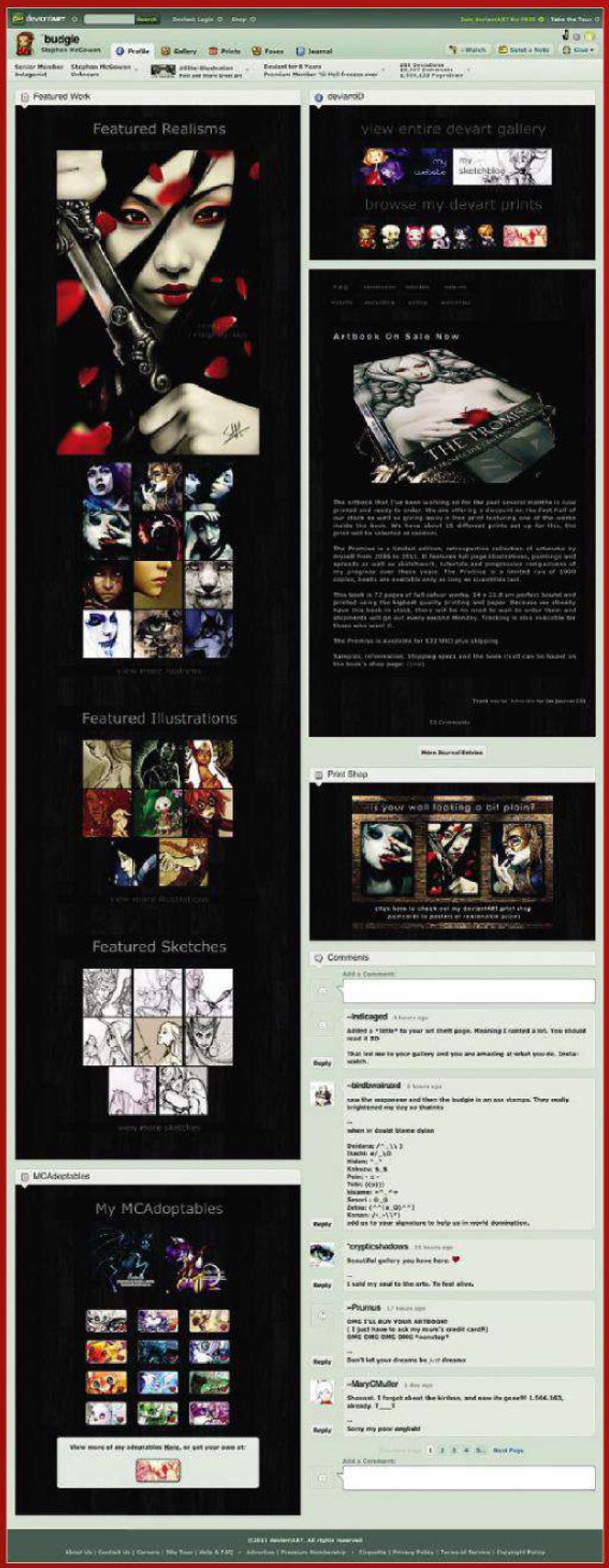
If there's one piece of advice that resonates – whether you choose to produce a digital or printed portfolio – William sums it up: "Think 'first impressions'. Begin your portfolio with either your best piece or your best-known piece. It should all add up to that 'Ah-ha, you're that guy!' moment." When this happens, you're half-way to getting the job you've always wanted.

Turn the page for more tips on digital and print portfolios.

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THE PERFECT PORTFOLIO



PRINT AND DIGITAL

Should you have an online or a paper portfolio?



The CGPortfolio option is a good one if you've not got your own site set up. Art directors often browse the site, looking for potential recruits.



Showcase your personality alongside your art with a regularly updated blog – it may be enough to land you on the interview shortlist.

Upgrade your free deviantART account for $30 per year. Premium users are able to customise their Profile and Gallery pages – a key factor if you're using dA as your online portfolio.

The truth is, you must have both a digital and a printed portfolio. The latter can be a basic mailer or brochure of your work. For a print portfolio, get samples of paper, get access to a good or professional printer and make sure it's properly bound or mounted. There's nothing worse than sloppy presentation. Think about what image you want to convey and come up with an original idea for your mailers to tie everything together – something that'll immediately get the attention of your viewer.

As far as an online portfolio goes, a bespoke site is always best – but that doesn't necessarily mean coding from scratch. For instance, you could set up a free Tumblr account (**www.tumblr.com**), tie it to a custom domain and use that as your portfolio. There's also the likes of CGSociety's CGPortfolio service and deviantART. The latter is particularly good if you go for the paid option – and you can quickly generate a pro-looking site with a custom domain. CGPortfolio is a trusted source for art directors, with a huge community to offer you advice.

All art directors will agree, though, that you have to follow the Keep it Simple, Stupid formula with your online portfolio, because if it's not simple in its navigation and design, you'll be the one who looks stupid. Oh, and never use Facebook photos to showcase your work – it screams 'amateur'!

Websites offering portfolio services

deviantART Portfolio
What: Slick and easy-to-build portfolios.
Cost: Free (also premium with no dA branding for $30 per year).
Where: **portfolio.deviantart.com**

CGPortfolio
What: Hosted portfolio service with a thriving community.
Cost: Free for GTalk or CGSociety members ($50).
Where: **portfolio.cgsociety.org**

Tumblr
What: Quick blogging platform that can be used as an image gallery.
Cost: Free.
Where: **www.tumblr.com**

Blogger
What: Google-owned blogging platform.
Cost: Free.
Where: **www.blogger.com**

WordPress
What: Advanced, but easy-to-use blogging platform.
Cost: Free ($15 per year for custom domain).
Where: **wordpress.com**

Carbonmade
What: Simple yet stylish portfolio solution.
Cost: Free for five projects ($12 a month for up to 50 projects).
Where: **carbonmade.com**

Squarespace
What: Slick, professional portfolio service mainly aimed at designers and photographers.
Cost: $12-$36 a month.
Where: **www.squarespace.com**

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THE ARTIST'S VIEW

LOÏC ZIMMERMANN

The renowned painter runs us through his portfolio process…



THE ASSASSIN
Loïc chose to include this piece of character art in his portfolio, which in turn led to him getting his big break as a professional artist.

Do you have a physical printed portfolio or is it all online?
For a long time I used to have a printed portfolio. These days it's online and also on my iPad.

How often do you update your online portfolio?
It's a very simple-looking website but, basically, every time I upload an image on my Flickr account, the website is updated and a smartphone version is generated. It's good to have a webmaster! So my portfolio is always up to date.

How do you pick the pieces to go in your portfolio?
I'm using a me-myself-I version of the top banner of some websites and forums. I've got four images displayed at the top. For those, I try to have a selection of styles rather than a simple chronological system. The idea is to cover a range of options for people and clients. After that, my portfolio pretty much contains all I've done – it's more of an archive. By experience, I'd tend to think that people are lazy or lack the time; unless you've triggered their curiosity already, they're not likely to spend hours into your portfolio. Therefore, when I'm contacting a client for the first time or answering a request, I try to add three to five images, web-friendly, to my email. You don't want to ruin their nerves with a 6MB email, but you can't trust them to go and check your stuff with a simple link to your website. Find the good balance. Tease.

What do you do to get the attention of art directors or clients? And how do you know who to contact?
Nothing. I do my stuff without asking anyone and those who are interested usually come knocking. I'm not really looking for jobs because I've got a full-time one and loads of personal projects to work on. But still, I keep myself busy with a little illustration or concept here and there. Again, I'm lucky enough not to have to claim for a gig these days, but no matter what, the one thing you need to do to get their attention is to be good at what you're doing. Job or no job, you need to work. Always.

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Artists' opinions

"ImagineFX is the best published source of conceptual art information that I have ever seen. The magazine is a must-have investment for any aspiring concept artist who wants to take their skills to the next level."
Andrew Jones, concept artist, Massive Black Inc

"ImagineFX is a unique resource for the science-fiction and fantasy community. It has invaluable tips and techniques for a range of software, and encourages aspiring artists to get their work in print and receive international exposure."
Jonny Duddle, freelance artist

LIVE IN THE US/CANADA? TURN TO PAGE 83

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Artist Q&A

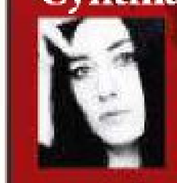
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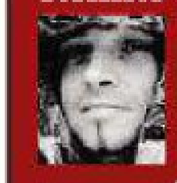
Cynthia Sheppard



Cynthia is a freelance digital artist. With a background in traditional painting, she likes to bring classical techniques to her work on digital canvas.

www.sheppard-arts.com

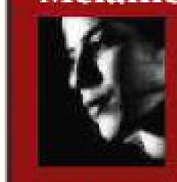
Remko Troost



Born in Amsterdam, Remko is a senior concept artist and illustrator with several years' experience in the film and video game industries.

www.remkotroost.com

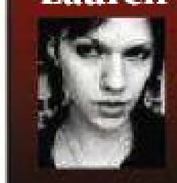
Mélanie Delon



Mélanie is a freelance fantasy illustrator. She works as a cover artist for several publishing houses, and on her personal artbook series.

www.melaniedelon.com

Lauren K Cannon



Lauren is a freelance fantasy artist who specialises in the surreal. She lives in a small woodland village in New Jersey, US.

www.navate.com

Brynn Metheney



Brynn was raised in the Mojave desert and moved to the Bay Area in 2006. Creature and animal illustrations are her forte.

www.brynnart.com

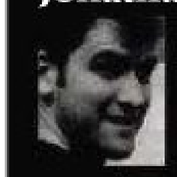
Saejin Oh



Saejin is a 26-year-old freelance illustrator who works for Udon. He loves creating concept art and character designs.

saejinoh.blogspot.com

Jonathan Standing



Jonathan is an English artist and illustrator. He's based near Toronto, Canada, and works for a developer in the video games industry.

www.jonathanstanding.com

Question

I'm having trouble painting back muscles. Can you help me out?

Cameron Cook, England

Answer

Lauren replies



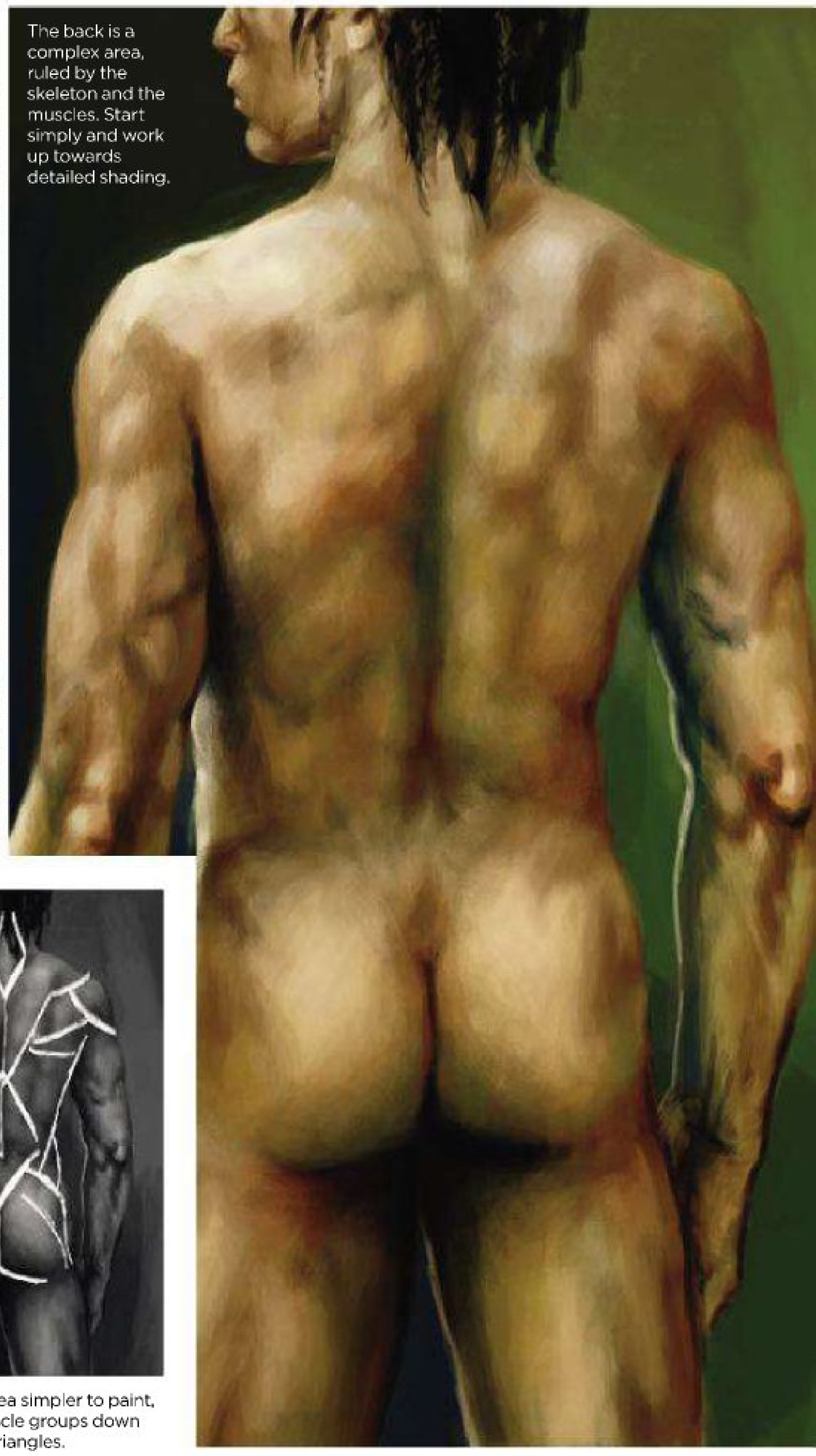
Instead of being a series of straightforward shapes – like the muscles of the arms – muscles on the back often look like a random mess of bumps and bulges. Their appearance also changes drastically depending on the movement of the torso and arms. The rib cage, shoulder blades and spine can also all impact the surface of the back alongside the muscles. All in all, it gets confusing, so it's crucial to have reliable reference material and general anatomy knowledge if you want to tackle back muscles successfully.

There are a few key points to remember regarding the back. The first is that there will be a crease along the spine. The more muscular a person is, the deeper this crease will be. Along the spine are two diamond-shaped areas: one at the small of the back and one at the shoulders. These are two good visual reference points for remembering where to place the muscles. The rest of the muscle patterns on the back follow a series of diagonals that relate to those two triangles.

Although this simplification is handy for mapping out anatomy, the surface detail of a muscular back is more complicated. Between the muscles, bones, fat deposits and skin, there are networks of subtle grooves and shadows that occur even on an undeveloped back. Use the triangle guide to do your basic mapping and then, using references as guides, fill in the blanks with subtle shading.

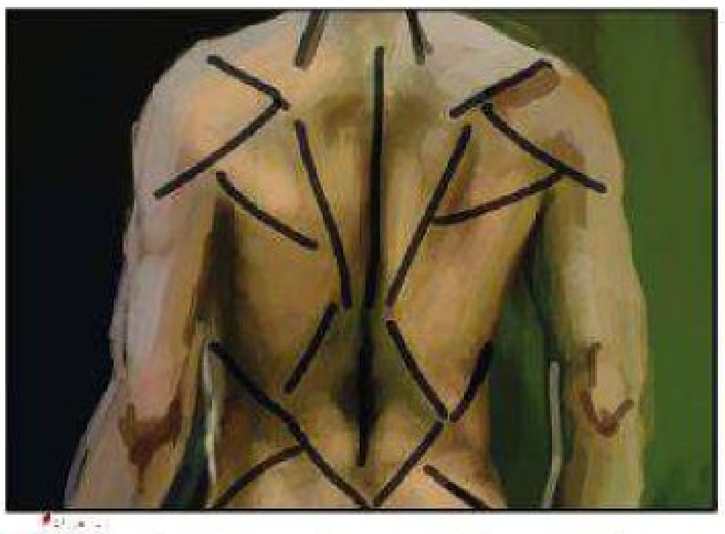


To make the back area simpler to paint, break the major muscle groups down into diamonds and triangles.



The back is a complex area, ruled by the skeleton and the muscles. Start simply and work up towards detailed shading.

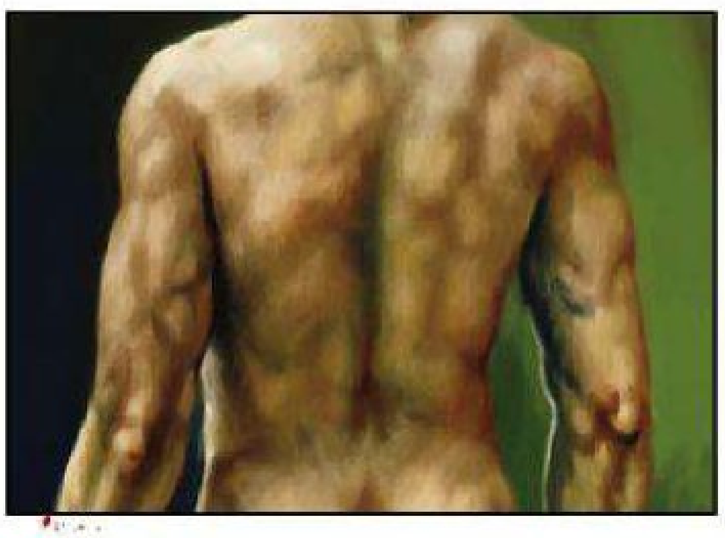
Step-by-step:
Defining a strong, muscular back



1 Block in your shapes with a simple brush. Don't worry about being loose, just establish a basic form and plan where the rest of the limbs will go. Then use the triangle guide to map out the major muscle regions of the back. I also establish my skin tones and lighting during this stage, to make things easier further down the road.

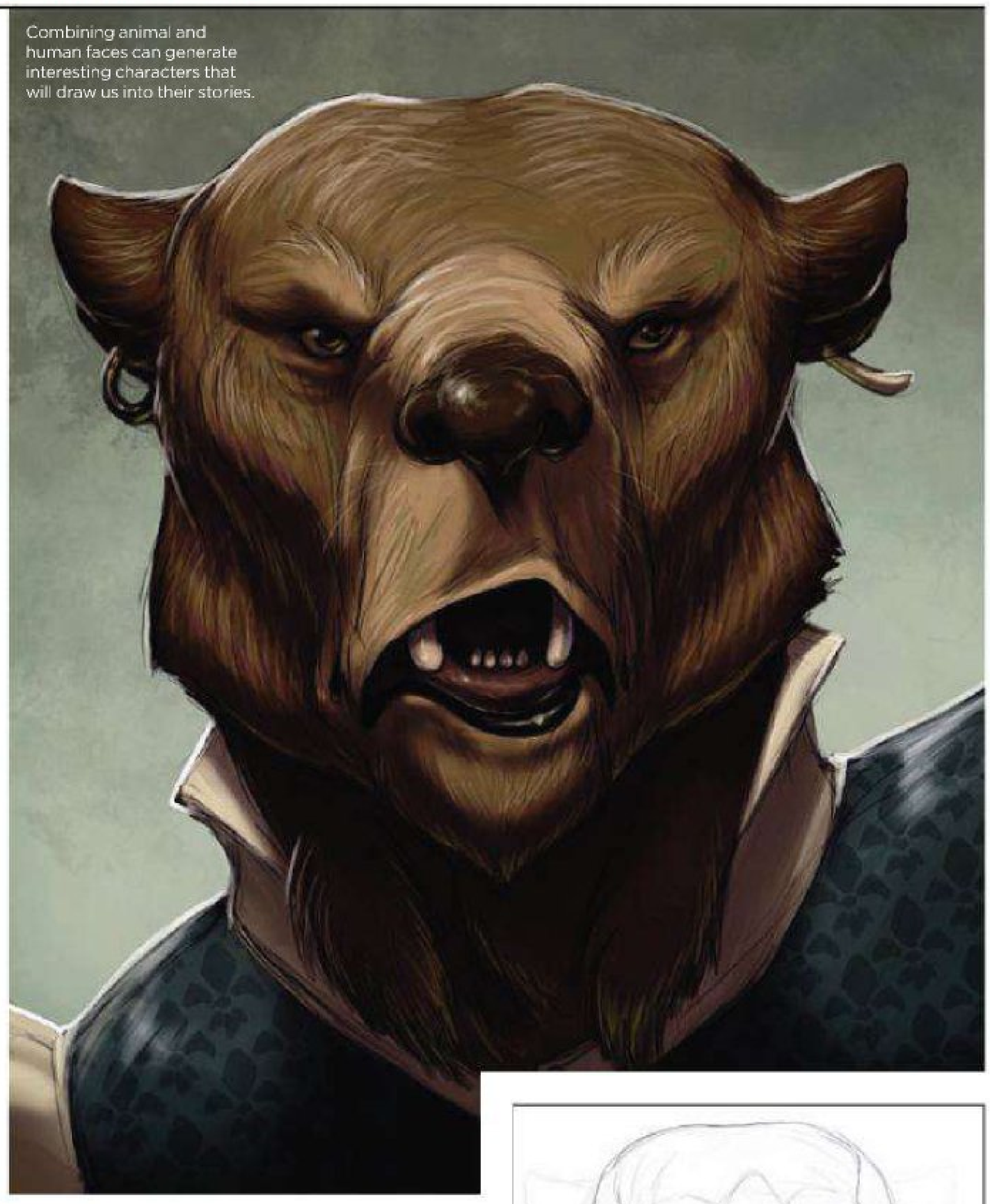


2 The back is a versatile surface, so you don't need to be precise once you establish the muscle groups. Blend your colours and use a Spackled brush to create subtle variations that suggest muscle definition. Spackled brushes are ideal for skin because they have a texture that makes skin look richer and more detailed.



3 How much definition you put in will depend on how strong you want the back to look. Here I push the colours and shading and add more detail to portray a warrior's back. Keep all the details and shadows softer for a less muscular back or a woman's body. Back structure will still be visible but less 'bumpy' and defined.

Question
Have you got any tips for combining animal and human faces?
Lucy Payton, Australia



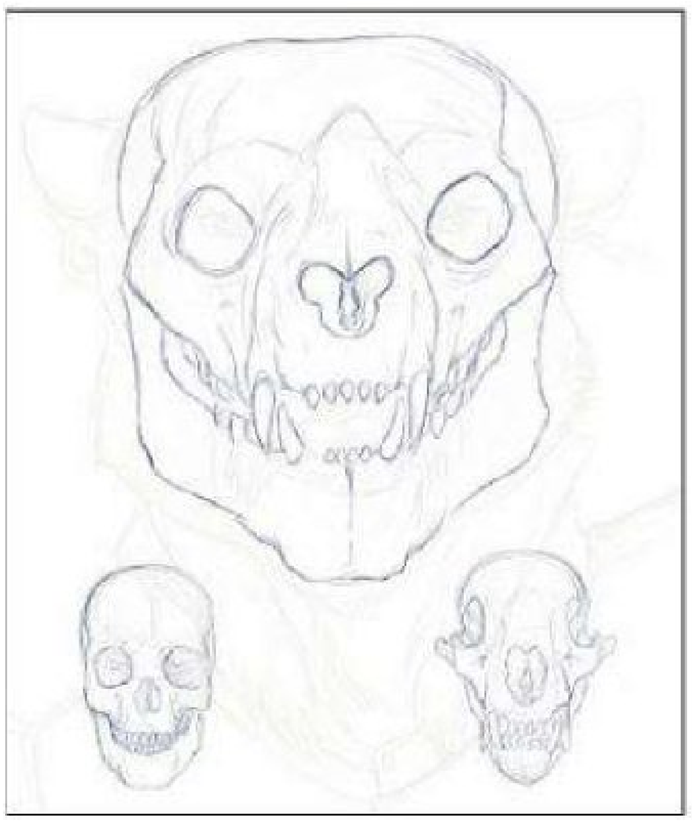
Answer
Brynn replies



Bringing together human and animal faces can be a great way to generate characters and creatures with personality and intrigue. By adding human facial elements, one can easily create a relatable character.

One trick is to look at the skulls you want to combine. I've used a human and a bear in this instance, although I have kept a lot of the bear intact. You can fluctuate between the animal and the human as much as you'd like.

Looking at the facial structure of the particular animal will help you to gain a better understanding of how it's put together. In my illustration I've paid close attention to keep the eyes pointing forward. This helps keep that human-looking face. I've also shown the whites of the character's eyes: a distinct human trait. Adding some expression to the face of the creature will also help to give it a tangible personality and credibility. Making a face in the mirror like the expression you want to draw helps not only to see it, but also to know what it would feel like. Of course, reference is always your friend.



I've sketched out two skulls – a human's and a bear's – to help me become familiar with both creatures. Then I've combined the two into something new!

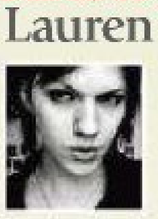
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Question
Do you have any tips for using a limited colour palette?
Simon Johnston, Wales



Answer
Lauren replies



The key thing to remember is that a limited colour palette is not as limited as it seems. Even when an image is dominated by only one or two colours, there are plenty of variations within those colours that help to create a richer image.

Colours encompass more than hue; they also include value and saturation. If you have an image that you want limited to blues, your first thought might be that the range begins at a greenish blue and stops at a purplish blue. But it goes further than that. You have every variation of light and dark blue within that hue range, as well as saturated and de-saturated blues.

The best thing about saturation in particular is that it can allow you to stay within a limited palette, while making it appear as though you are using additional colours. Often a yellow or red that's very de-saturated will look blue against more saturated colours. Saturation is a great way to add punch to a palette. To help keep your limited palette in sight, make some swatches to refer to and colour pick from beforehand. In addition, try adding in a complementary or accented colour.



Swatches can be helpful when working in limited palettes. The greyish tone in the middle functions as the light blue in my frog picture.

Question
How can I quickly create distance in my digital images?
Rose Conway, US



Answer
Remko replies



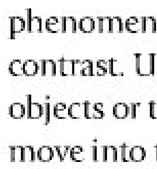
In real life, distant objects are separated from us by molecules in the atmosphere, such as water vapour and carbon dioxide. As light is reflected on them they make it scatter, causing distant objects to lose their contrast. To simulate this phenomenon in Photoshop, consider contrast. Use the Lasso tool to select the objects or the part of the scene you want to move into the distance. Now, on a new layer fill your mask with a blueish colour to imitate this scattering effect and adjust the opacity of this layer. In this way the shadows become less dark and less contrasted as the objects near the viewer's eye, creating depth inside your picture.

Another way is to darken the foreground. Create a gradient of dark green on the foreground to transparent on the distant objects. Then set this layer to Multiply mode.

A final way is to draw your distant objects on a new layer just as a silhouette/outline and then lower their opacity to make them disappear in the distance. Try to observe the colours you see in distant objects and the way these objects act in real life, before reproducing those in your paintings.

Question
Can you give me the lowdown on foreshortening please?
Kaz Wright, England

Answer
Cynthia replies



Foreshortening is a technique that uses perspective to create the illusion of three-dimensional depth in a two-dimensional space. The rules of perspective tell us that objects appear smaller as they recede into space; likewise, long objects start to appear shorter as they're tilted towards or away from the viewer.

You'll notice the effect used a lot in comics when, say, a hero has his fist punching toward the reader and the fist is drawn three times the size of his head. That's because his head is receding into space in relation to the fist, and his arm is now taking up much less space on the page because we're viewing much less of its surface area and mass. But how does our hero arrive at such unseemly proportions?

Many student artists (not just those interested in fantasy and science fiction!) struggle putting the theory of foreshortening into practice. I've found that the best way to learn how it works is through observation and tons of practice with life drawing, but there are a few quick methods that can help us figure out the distortion using lines…

Question
Do you have any advice on creating unique military camouflage?
Mike Perry, US



Answer
Jonathan replies



Camouflage is all about breaking up large shapes with visual information so that they blend into the environment and, as such, you can use just about any shape or texture to create it. Custom brushes or shapes are a brilliant way to generate this type of information quickly.

Thinking about the environment that your scene is taking place in is a logical choice. Want to create jungle soldiers? Photoshop comes loaded with leaf brushes and they're easy to make yourself. In an Overlay, Multiply or Screen layer it's effective to simply paint the information in, on top of an already rendered character.

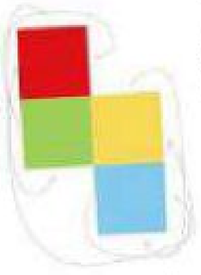
Prefer urban soldiers? Geometric shapes, rubble shapes; the trick is to use information to divide shape. In this image, I use the simplest brush possible to make the camouflage pattern; a square that I simply place in different arrangements and colours. Camouflage benefits from using at least three colours, but it works best to keep them within a narrow band of colours and/or tones.

Even pictorial information makes fine camouflage: guns, skulls – whatever's appropriate to your story, as long as you overlap them and stick to a controlled colour scheme. Keeping the shapes you use small in relation to the overall shapes that you intend to apply them to is also worth keeping in mind. This way you avoid any repeating pattern that you create being too obvious to the viewer.

Here, I make the square camouflage separately in another document and then apply it using another overlay layer, over a black and white rendering.

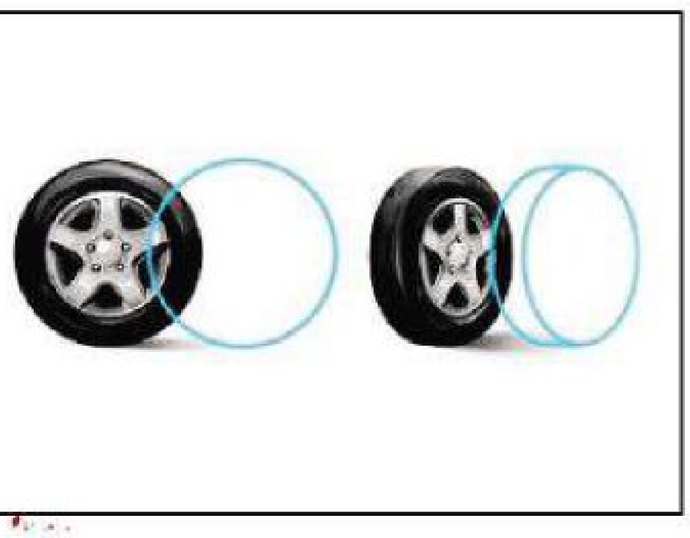
The key to successful camouflage is a limited colour scheme and the avoidance of obvious repeating patterns.

Artist's secret
TILED CAMOUFLAGE

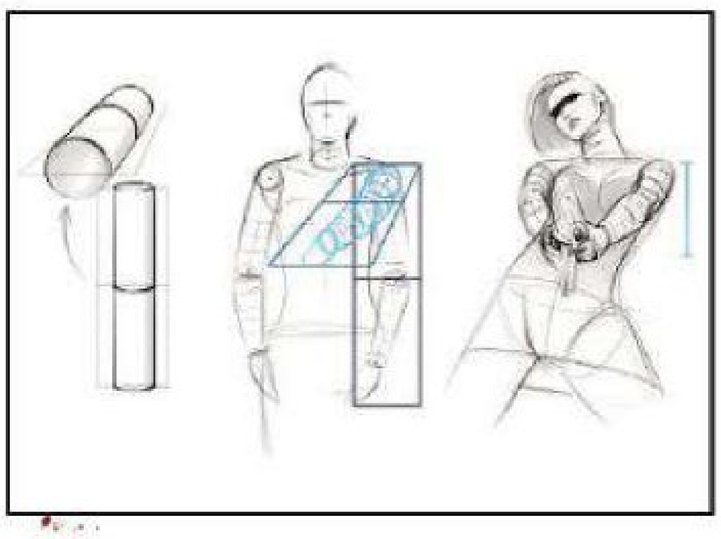


If you don't have any plug-ins available to do it automatically, then by organising squares in the arrangement here and using the snap function to keep them lined up, you can make the edges of your texture match and create a tiled camo pattern.

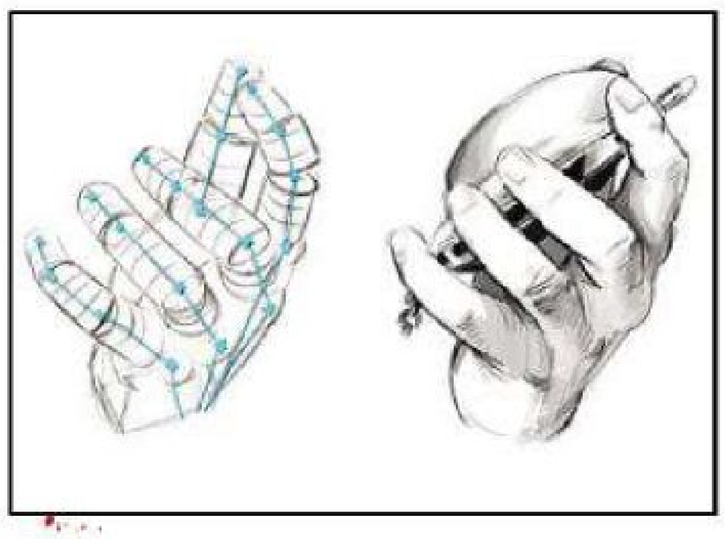
Step-by-step: Three ways to figure out foreshortening



1 The easiest way to demonstrate how the illusion works is with basic geometric shapes. One of my favourite old examples is what happens when you look at a wheel from the side. In a flat view, the wheel is a perfect circle. But when you walk around it, the shape becomes an oval that becomes slimmer as you keep moving.



2 So, how much of that arm should we see in the image? Another method uses a plane with a central line drawn through the elbow. When we tilt the plane using the Transform>Perspective tool, this central line recedes and indicates where the elbow joint should be when the arm is foreshortened.

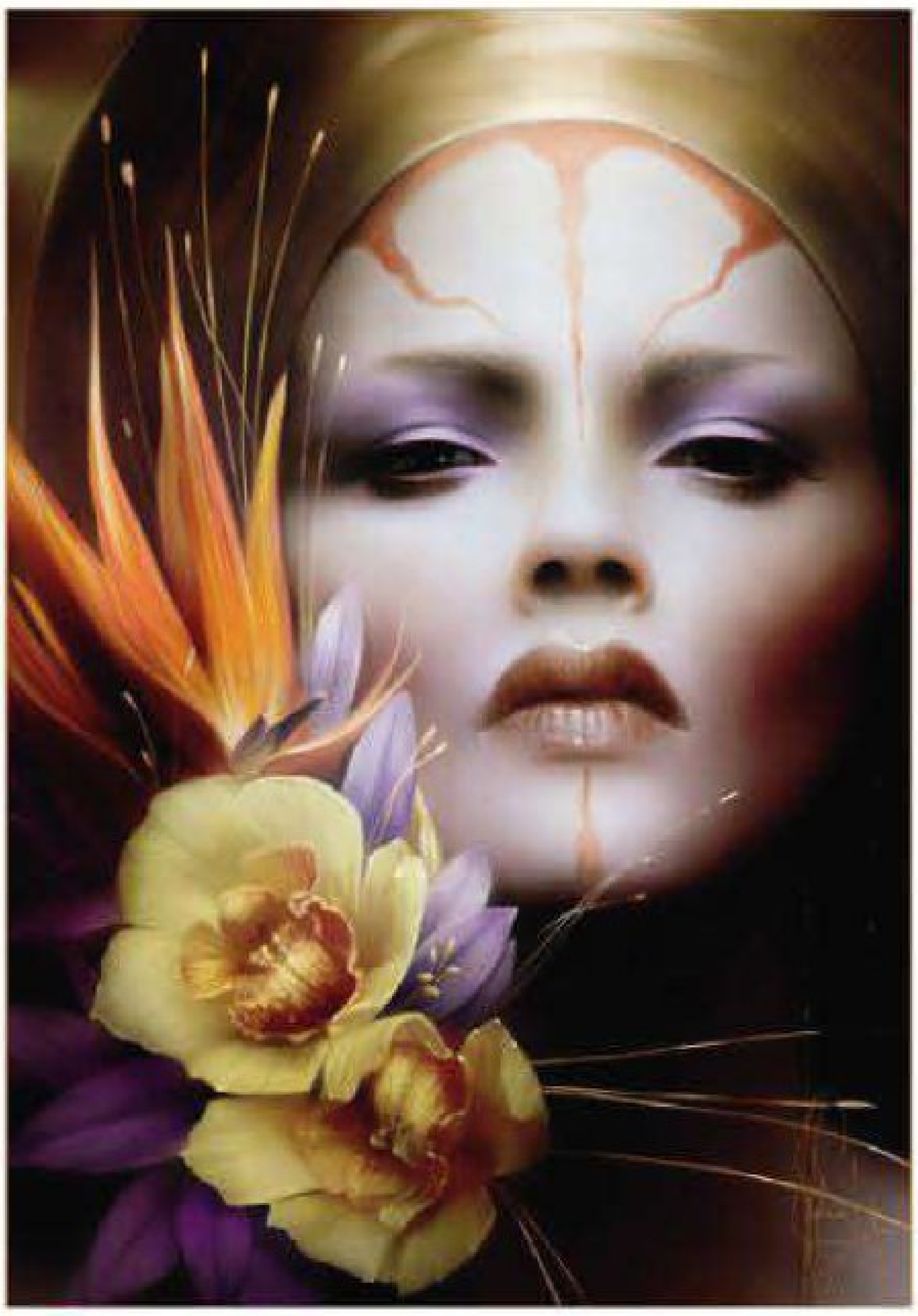


3 There's also a benefit to seeing the effect in reverse. Draw your hand from life. Make a mark at each of the knuckle joints and draw a line between each joint. You should see a vast difference in line lengths – shorter when the finger segment is positioned toward you, and longer when it's parallel to your plane of view.

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Question
How do I paint exotic, luminous, detailed flowers?

Sophie Fagen, US



I've avoided the basic green colour for the leaves. Exotic flowers bring more fantasy than traditional ones can to a painting, so have fun with your colours!

Answer
Mélanie replies



Exotic flowers are a great alternative choice for floral compositions in a paintings; they're infinitely more original than basic roses. Painting them isn't too difficult, either: all you have to know is what type of flower you want. Some are pretty much like traditional flowers, while some can look like they're made from plastic, but all of them are colourful. This point becomes particularly important when painting them.

Before starting painting my exotic flowers, I always do some research. This is key here, because these kinds of flowers are very unusual and so I need to have good references to work from.

You can have a lot of freedom and fun with colour choices when painting exotic flowers. Here, I choose a tender violet to paint some leaves. You don't have to use lots of different colours – just a few that will suit the general composition. The trick is to add a lot of colour variations; in the orange flower, for example, I use a red that's mixed with a very saturated pink and orange, and some hints of intense yellow at the top of the petals. This will bring enough texture for this kind of flower.

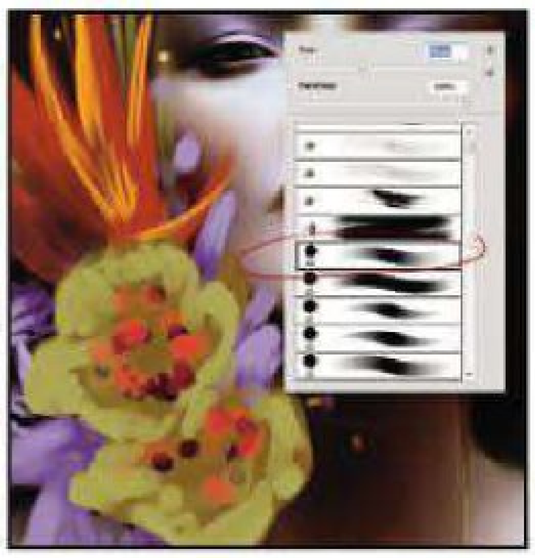
Artist's secret

THE PERFECT SHADOWS

The common mistake with shadows is to use black or desaturated dark tones that will give a dirty look. To avoid this, I usually pick the colour I want to use for the shadows (here a dark blue) and increase the saturation using Photoshop's Colour Picker window.



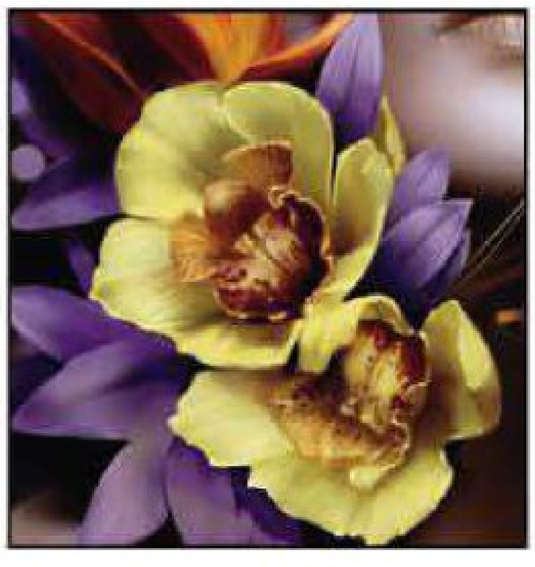
Step-by-step: Perfecting exotic flowers



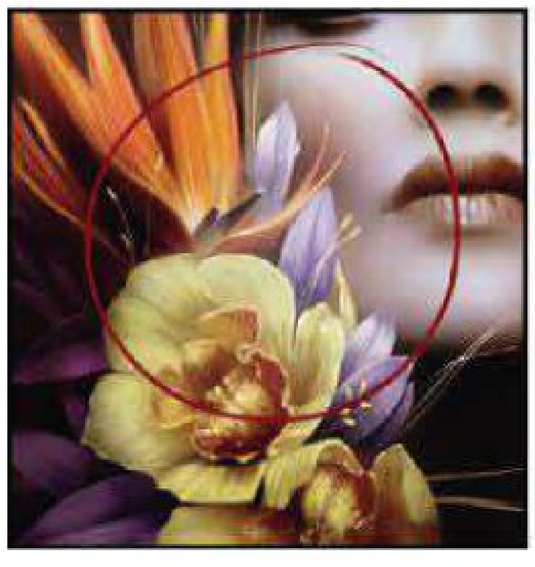
1 The first thing I do is a colour test. I need to identify shades that will suit the character and the scene, and the best way to do this is to quickly sketch directly into the painting. I use a basic Round Edge brush in Photoshop to do this. Choosing to paint exotic flowers justifies going wild with colour, so don't hesitate to oversaturate them.



2 Now that I have my colour base and my general flower composition, I can define the shapes properly. I use a basic Round Edge brush again for this step, as I don't want to have a lot of texture or colour variations for the moment. I add the first hints of shadows and light, and correct the yellow of the foreground flower, because it was a bit unsaturated at first.



3 I focus on the details and the texture, and give the petals more definition, ensuring my big orange flower has a curvy shape. I add some red dots on the yellow flowers, but pick different shades of red for the dots – this texture needs a lot of colour variation. I also play around with the Layer Mode options (Color Dodge or Soft Light) to add a greater intensity to the colours.



4 Now it's time to think about integrating the flowers with the character I painted earlier. I'm not happy with the light here, so on another layer I add a huge block of pale violet light with a very soft brush to the upper part of the floral composition. I want the light to be very diffuse, so I blur the whole layer. I also add more details and petals here and there.

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Question
How do I make my picture look more painterly?
Daniel Conway, England



I created this picture with the aim of making it look like a traditional painting from the start. This meant working traditionally and not using the Undo function.

Answer
Remko replies



There are several ways to give your picture a painterly look. You can either use textures or, as I prefer to do, simply take a painterly approach to your image right from the start.

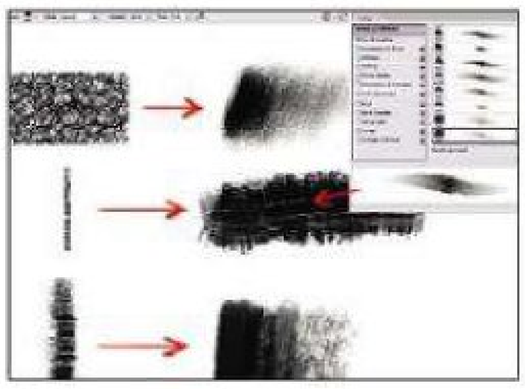
To do this I first create my own painterly brushes. I set up a new document and on a white background I paint black shapes that resemble traditional brush tips. Using these shapes, I create new brushes that I manipulate to make them act like traditional brushes.

I started out as a traditional artist, and I try to stick to these techniques as closely as possible. This means that in the case of oils, for example, I start with the darker colours and slowly work my way through to the lighter colours, before finally putting in the highlights.

I try not to use more then one layer, and paint all in on the same canvas. I avoid using the Undo function and repaint over my errors instead, because this gives more texture to the painting. I also avoid using the Color Picker and try to select the colours by hand each time. This creates good colour variations and trains your eye to see associations between colours and tones.

I use a brush flow of between 50 and 70 per cent; doing so means that you get even closer to the feeling of traditional painting. It gives you more control on shading your colours and values, too.

Finally, if you just want your image to look painterly quickly, you could prepare some painting textures yourself and scan them to superimpose on a new layer in an Overlay or Multiply mode.



Here, I create my painterly brushes and try to make them act as much as possible like traditional brushes. I try to paint shapes that come close to traditional brush tips and charcoal, then manipulate them with the Natural Media Brushes menu.

Question
How can I draw convincing legs and feet for my characters?
Brian Loveland, US

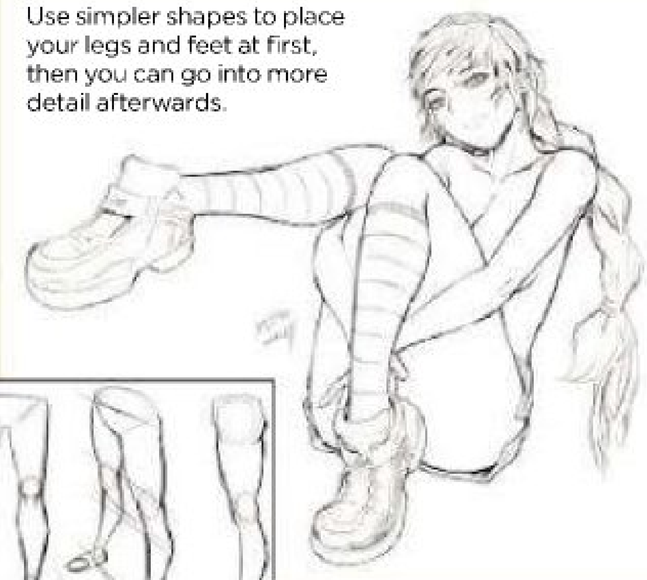
Answer
Saejin replies



Of the many things attached to the human body, hands and feet are among the most difficult to get right. Incidentally, they're also the parts with the most dense bone clusters, so it's no wonder you're having problems drawing them.

The key point in drawing authentic-looking legs and feet is in understanding that they're asymmetric by nature. Each side of a leg or foot has a unique shape that's not replicated anywhere else. The only way to draw them is by getting comfortable with these shapes. For instance, the lower leg may seem like a cylinder, but the muscle bulge on each side and on the back causes the leg to have more of a chicken-leg shape. In addition, drawing circles at where major joints are as a placeholder or guide will help your limb placement and direction. Watch out for the perspective, as well: draw perspective lines over the legs to correct them. If you do these things right, they'll appear more convincing and accurate.

Use simpler shapes to place your legs and feet at first, then you can go into more detail afterwards.



Learn and understand how each side of the leg and foot is shaped. Use guides, perspective lines and simple joints to draw the leg.

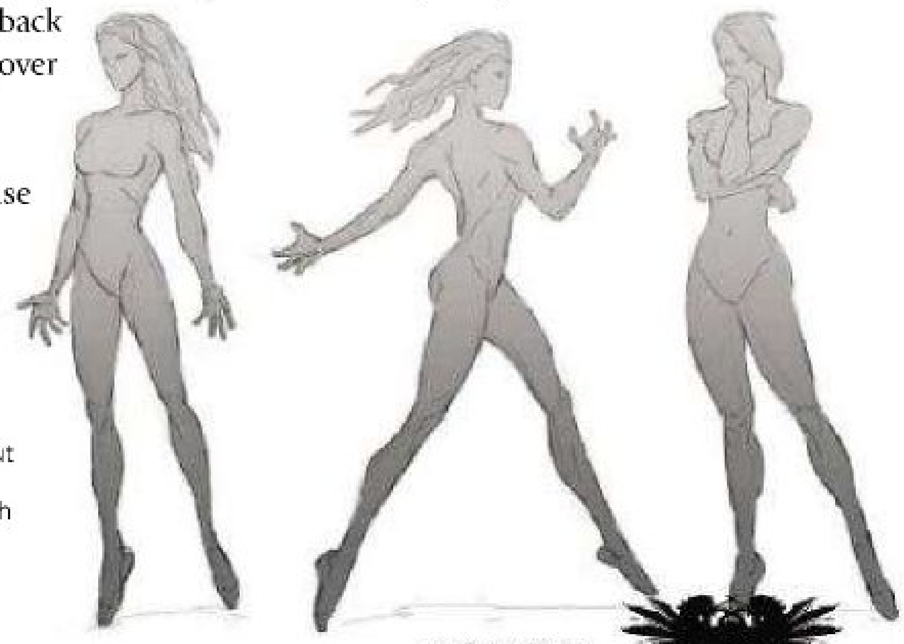
Question
How do I pose a sexy supervillain?
Cassidy Jones, Australia

Answer
Jonathan replies



Creating a supervillain (or superhero) design gives you the chance to paint a character in a context where everything about them displays their character traits and what they can or can't do. If you make your supervillain's hair or costume sexy, then their pose should do the same. Pay attention to the angle at which you draw the character – a provocative angle is best. A three-quarter perspective or having the character's back to the viewer, looking over their shoulder, is appealing. I'd avoid a straight-on view because it has little mystery, which is a large part of a supervilliain's sex appeal.

Try to isolate the limbs from one another and play up the angles between arms, legs and torso. Don't ignore the natural curve of the spine, the twist of the hips. Most importantly, the pose, while being sexy, should also reflect the type of character you're creating. If they are a strong, physical character they should have a dynamic, open pose. If they are a conniving, subtle character, then close the pose up a little and keep it mysterious.



These poses are all sexy, but each shows a different personality to go along with that sexuality.

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Question
What advice can you give for painting a portrait with almost no shadows?
Martin Basham, England



Once the eyes are more evident, it's important to have the same level of detail all over the face. I always add some sharp details to the features.

Because the whole portrait receives the same amount of light I need to contrast a particular part of the face. Adding soft shadows to the eyes using a soft-edged brush increases the light around them.

Answer
Mélanie replies

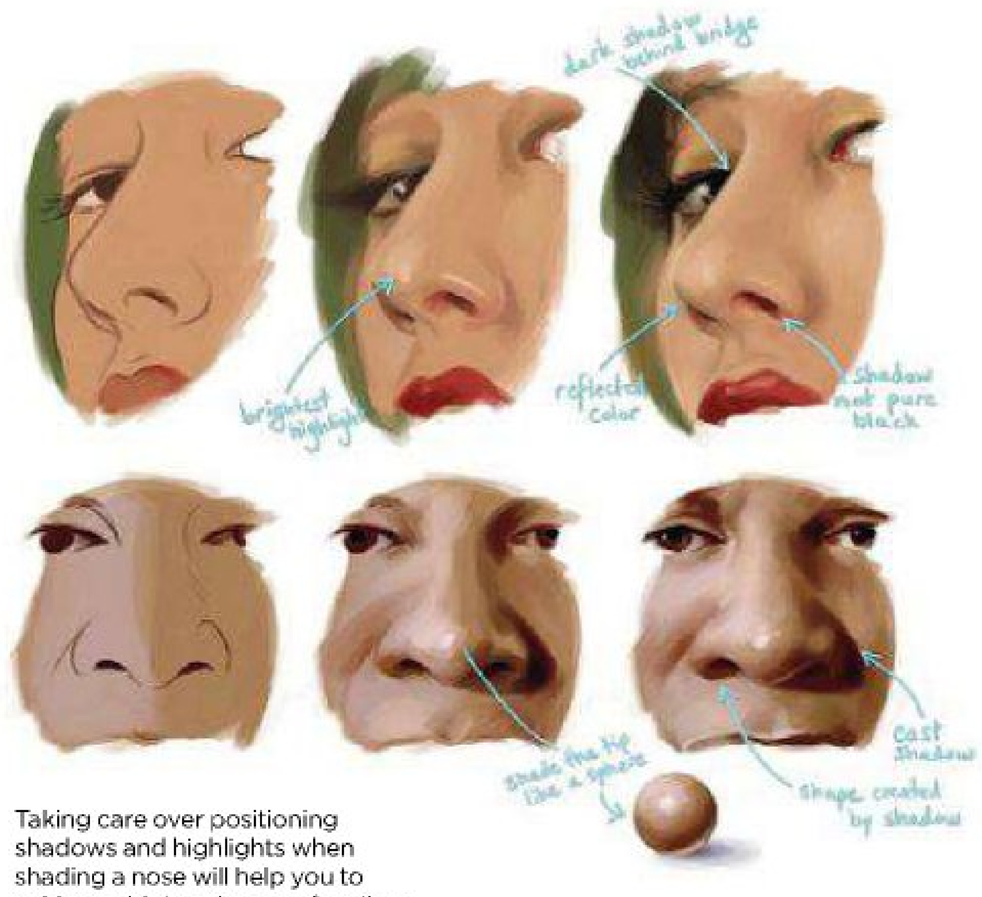


It's harder to paint something realistic without strong shadows than with, because adding shadows usually defines the volume and the shapes. It's also a great way to attract the eye to the most luminous part of a painting. Here, I'm going to do the opposite – I'll contrast the part of the face I want the viewer to be drawn to, and leave the rest of the face in full light.

Another trick is to overuse layers. I always paint my shadows on a different layer, and once it's done I set the opacity to 50 per cent – this way they stay light and diffuse. I also don't use any kind of hard, round-edged brushes; I prefer to work on the shading with a soft-edged one, because it helps to avoid strong shadows.

The last point, of course, is to add light. I usually add it all over the painting on another layer, to blend the face perfectly with the background and attenuate the shadows. I add extra light on facial features such as the lips, the nose and the eyelids, just to be sure that those particular parts will stand out and catch the viewer's eye.

Question
How do I paint noses with different angles and shapes?
William Palacio, US



Taking care over positioning shadows and highlights when shading a nose will help you to achieve a higher degree of realism.

Answer
Cynthia replies



Start by visualising the nose as a 3D object that casts shadows. As well as its anatomy, many of the shapes we think of when we imagine a nose are created by shadows that give form to the nose itself.

In its simplest form, the nose is a triangular block that's wide in the back and tapers towards the front. You can use a visual model to determine where the major cast shadows will fall, and see how its bridge would change shape from straight to angled as the head turns. Of course, noses don't have sharp angles, so we have to imagine the tip of the nose as being more like a sphere and the bridge like a cylinder when shading.

When painting the nose, keep these things in mind. Start with a line drawing on a flat skin tone. Bearing in mind the geometric shapes we've already discussed, apply your brushstrokes following the contours. Some noses are shiny and so they often pick up colour from the surrounding environment. Reserve the lightest colour on the skin of the face for the highlight on the nose.



Thinking of a nose as a series of geometric shapes can make it easier to visualise at various angles.

Artist's secret

A NOSE FOR SHADING

Avoid pure black when painting nostrils. The nostril itself is an empty space with very little discernible shape of its own, so what's actually painted is the shadow cast by the surrounding nose. Instead of black, choose a dark colour that resembles the other shadows in your painting.

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Next month
ON SALE: **31 May**
How to create manga character sheets

Question
I'm having trouble showing an animal running head-on. Help!
Sarah Halem, England

Answer
Brynn replies



Before painting anything you'll need an understanding of animal anatomy and perspective. Luckily with organic objects, such as animals, we can bend perspective a bit. Starting out simple will help keep things clear for you and, eventually, your viewer. Wire-frame skeletons are a great way to start creating any animal. This step is crucial, because skeletons hold most creatures together, and so it's important to know where they are in space. Drawing a simple grid on the ground will help in seeing where the body should lie, too. Drawing through the shapes and overlaying forms will help to make the creature look foreshortened.

A good understanding of animal movement will help with your image. Watching real animals move around in zoos or in nature documentaries will inform your knowledge of how they get around their environment. When painting the animals, it's good to have a light source so that you can keep things looking clear and convincing.

When I'm working in Photoshop, I usually turn off all of my layers except for my lines and my shadows; this way, I can see the forms and values clearly without worrying about colour. Drawing animals in the frontal aspect takes lots of practice and reference to get right.



By using some simple drawing techniques, we can lay the foundations for an animal walking head-on towards the viewer.

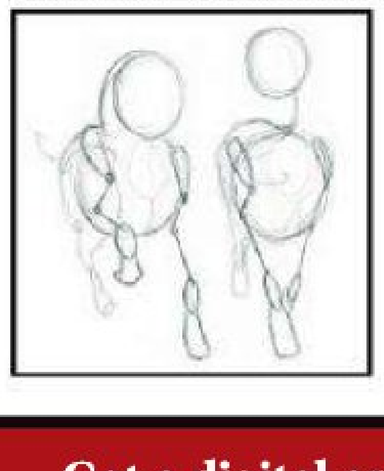


Artist's secret
TAKE A SIDEWAYS LOOK

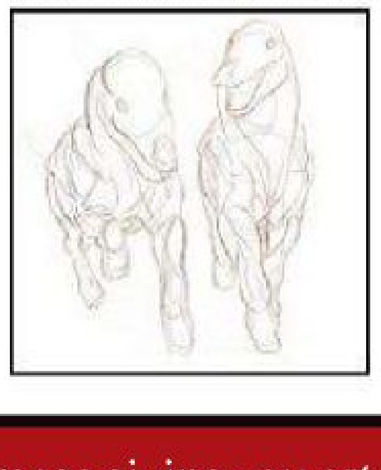
Sometimes drawing the animal in the same position from a side view can help with visualising it at a frontal aspect.

Step-by-step: Drawing an animal from the front

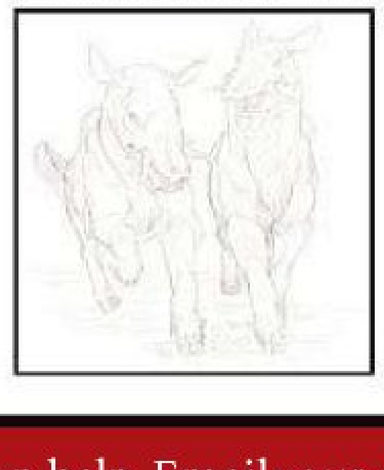
1 Starting out with a wire frame or skeleton of your animal will help you to get things in place without worrying about the details. Here, you should simply look to get the proportions and simple shapes of your animal in balance, drawing over the rear of the animal to make the foreshortening aspect easier.



2 Next, I usually rough in some very basic musculature. It doesn't have to be correct at this point – I just want to get in my large shapes to see where everything should be, including the animal's bulk. Don't go too crazy here, and ensure that you follow the rules as dictated by your chosen skeletal structure.



3 This is where I hit the anatomy books to check that my anatomy is in line. For fictional creatures, I just want to make sure that it looks convincing and informed. Understanding how real animals are made and move, however, is the best education that you can get for ensuring your imagined creature looks real.



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“I wanted to give my latest painting a mystical atmosphere, but feel I’ve failed with the lighting and I can’t think of a decent background. Help!” *Luisa Rafidi*

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

The Mentor

Bill Corbett



Bill is a UK-based freelance artist who produces illustrations for media groups, public relations companies, small businesses and private clients. He’s also a regular contributor to ImagineFX’s Q&A section.

www.billcorbett.co.uk

I’ll start off by complimenting Luisa on the good job she’s already done with her painting. She’s keen on creating a background to go with her character, something mystical. To accomplish this we’ll need to tackle four distinct areas: the underlying structure, composition and lighting, as well as introducing new details to develop the character’s personality.

To improve the painting we need to understand the character and find out more about their back story. Luisa tells me her character lives in a hot country where the sun is always bright. She works in a store selling bags, accessories, tunics and such, and all of these items have patterns like spirals and water droplets. These shapes and symbols can also be found in her home’s decoration. This is a great starting point. We’re already beginning to imagine what the background should look and feel like.

To make things easier I’ll divide my advice into four sections. Tackling each topic in turn will help to slowly add a background and integrate it with the character. Let’s get going!

Here, I’ve taken Luisa’s original artwork and done a quick paint-over, just to indicate my plans on pushing it to the next level.



1. Form and composition
Here we’ll look at creating more of the underlying structure and composition for the painting as a whole. I’ll go over some basic composition rules and how to apply them to Luisa’s painting. Getting this right will ensure that everything else we cover will work.

2. Background
It’s crucial to find a setting that complements the figure, palette, story and lighting. We need to ensure the background enhances the character and doesn’t overpower her. I’ll show Luisa some quick ways to add texture and patterns to create subtle background elements.

3. Lighting
Here we’ll look at multiple light sources and how to implement them into the painting for atmospheric effect. There are three distinct areas of light in Luisa’s painting – the window, lantern and brassier – and all of them require attention to make the background fit the character.

4. Detail
This will involve choosing areas that’ll enhance the painting as a whole and create interesting focus points for the viewer.

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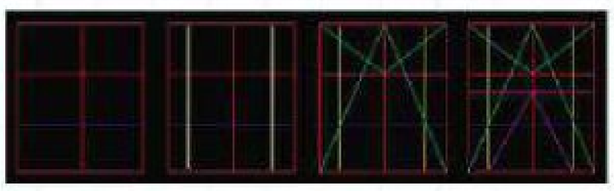
Part one: Form and composition – finding the perfect balance



I find that the easiest way to build up a composition is to use the 'one-third' rule, which is pretty much the same as the division they call the Golden Proportion.

Divide the canvas into thirds, both horizontal and vertical, and place points of interest along the third and other intersections, creating an arrangement that's pleasing to the eye and balanced. It also helps bring focus to the interest points in the painting. After a while you'll develop an inner feel for composition if you use this basic method to start out with.

The main point of this first step is to set up the framework for the next three steps.



Here's the sequence of how I added lines and diagonals to introduce balance in Luisa's image.

1 I increase the canvas size to at least three times the size of the character, then draw a line down the middle and a line at eye level. The latter line is one-third from the top of the painting. The bottom line completes the third section.

2 I divide the two sections by a third from each end, add some different shapes and use diagonals to intersect the top third for a small triangle and the whole height for a large triangle. The aim is to create a pattern that complements the figure.

3 I divide the middle third by another third and add the bottom triangle (pink lines), adding balance to the bottom half of the image. I arrange my objects around the central triangle using the shapes and intersections I've created.



In conversation...



Luisa: How did you know exactly where to add those triangles? I think that hiding the brassier would take away from the feeling of the painting, but I have no idea what to put in it.

Bill: The brassier, lamp and window are only meant to be guides to placing light sources. You can either keep any of them or change any of them as you please. The thing to remember is that you make it clear where and how the light is falling on your character, even if the source of light isn't visible within the scene, but we will get to that later on.

If you wanted to, you could make the light from below come from a mysterious source (unseen), or you could make your gems glow. You could have a candle or a lamp on a table just in front of the girl. Have a think about your character and her life, the things she does and the possessions she has. This is how you'll find suitable objects to fill your fantasy scene.

Part two: Background – keeping it consistent

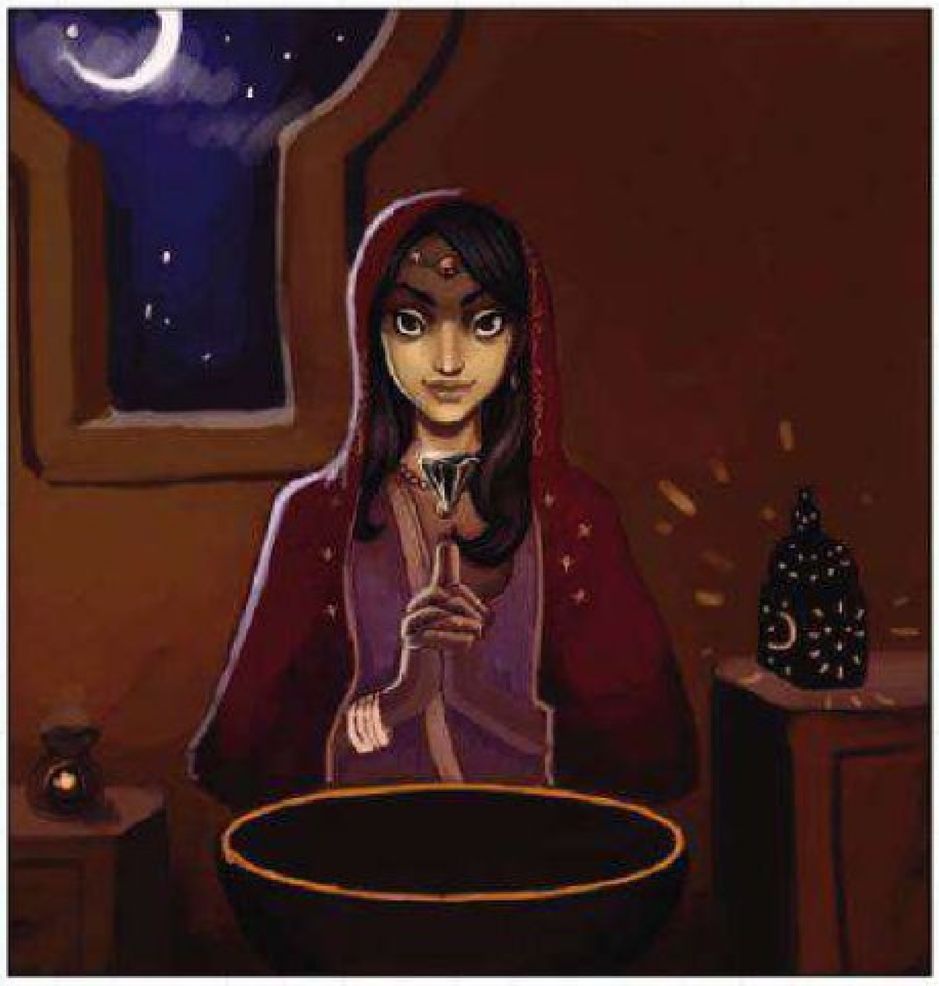


When I'm working on a painting I normally start small and enlarge the canvas every time I add additional levels of detail. It works well if you don't have a lot of resources on your computer.

After you've decided on your layout and drawn out your composition, make a note of the full size of the canvas and isolate your main figure on a separate layer. Save a back-up copy of the painting and then reduce the working copy by between 25 and 30 per cent. This is the starting point for painting the background. Make sure you save this one with a different name.

1 Before you start painting decide on the colours that'll bring your art to life. If you use a lot of the colour from your original, you'll keep a nice consistency. More interesting colours can be added later when we focus on the lighting.

2 Start out by flat painting all of the background surfaces. Then enlarge the canvas slightly and add variations in tone and strokes. Try and paint with only one main light source in mind – more lighting can be introduced later on. Work from back to front. Check that the figure matches the background, but don't paint the figure until your canvas has returned to its original size. Once you reach the actual size you can import the figure from your back-up copy and paint out the rest of the figure and the foreground props.



In conversation...



Luisa: What brush did you use to make that little 'dust' near the window?

Bill: That is done with a very light airbrush on a separate layer, and then the opacity lowered on the layer to make it more transparent.

Luisa: Would you do the wall's texture by hand, or use a texture?

Bill: I'd recommend using a custom brush to create a little interesting texture. I'd use a custom brush if you want to stamp some patterns into the walls. Nothing too detailed, though.



Luisa: I think the pattern's not blending well with the rest of the painting.

Bill: Try breaking up some of the pattern lines so it looks as if they're wearing away a little – so they don't look so crisp.

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Part three: Lighting – setting sources and playing with colour



The next step, with the form established and a basic background down, is to set the lighting. I've made another two quick paint-overs to give you an idea about setting your lighting. The second image is purposely garish to illustrate how the light affects the character. However, it doesn't cover every angle and that's something I think you'll have more time to implement when you're painting. These are only meant to be rough guides to help you.



1 Once you know where your light sources are coming from, establish the shadow areas that are formed around the objects and characters in your picture. Do this on a separate layer. Because the brightest light is coming up from the bottom of the painting, bring the shadow down from the right-hand corner and under the window.

2 Always paint the main light source first and establish the shadows caused by this. Reduce the intensity as you get further from the light source. Light reacts differently on different materials; here, the bracelet and the gem would have the most intense reflection of light.

3 When a second light source falls from a different direction remember to light the shadows. This creates a three-dimensional effect within the painting. Vary the colour of the light for a more mystical and magical effect. If you keep the shadows and lighting on separate layers then you'll find it easier to experiment.



4 Use the lights in the painting to highlight the texture in the wall, add some understated dents and cracks for extra effect. Do the same for the other objects too. Let the light bring life to your background.

In conversation...



Luisa: Is the light that falls on the girl always going to be blue, as long as it's from the sky? What about the light from the box thingy – is it always going to be orange/yellow?



Bill: Light with a distinctive hue will impart some of that colour to the object it reflects from. Imagine mixing the colour of the object with the colour of the light to produce a new, lighter colour (this isn't always true but is a good starting point). Lights also can be used to project certain moods. Moonlight isn't blue, it's a low-intensity light – but we can use a slight blue-ish tint to create the atmosphere of cold night, just as we can use the colours of fire to impart warmth. You can use whatever colours you please for lighting. So, the bowl could have a purple light, which would create a new set of hues from the objects it's reflected from.

Part four: Detail – developing focus in your painting



There are various techniques you can use for focusing in your painting. We've already talked about composition, and you've used light as a way of highlighting your character. Now we'll work on detail. When you look at something directly and focus on it, your vision will blur slightly in your peripheral vision. To replicate this effect the tightest details are added to the things you wish to bring the most attention too.

It's all coming together very well indeed! I think softer edges for the light patterns that are further from the light source would work well. I also think that the light on the wall might benefit from being more transparent where it falls on the patterns and texture of the wall.



1 Luisa mentioned she wants to use textured brush strokes. This is a great idea and one that she should incorporate into her painting. To make more of this, I'd suggest she gives the wall some chips, scratches and flakes where the light catches.



2 Make sure the girl stands out. Her hands and face should capture most attention. The patterns in her clothes will also help bring her into focus. By straightening the objects around her – the window and lantern – she'll also be better framed.



3 Finally, add a few more touches. Perhaps a few jewels by the lanterns or something else that tells the viewer something about the girl. Try and focus the little details into those areas that prevent the eye from wandering off the canvas.

In conversation...



Luisa: Do you have any tips for painting clouds?

Bill: Keep them consistent with your painting style. In this case they would have an 'anime' quality to them. Keep the edges between two tones in your clouds soft, even if the contrast between them is high. The moon is behind the clouds so unless the clouds are very translucent the side facing away from the light will be dark. Finally, moonlight on the cloud edges would create an aura around the cloud in front of the moon.



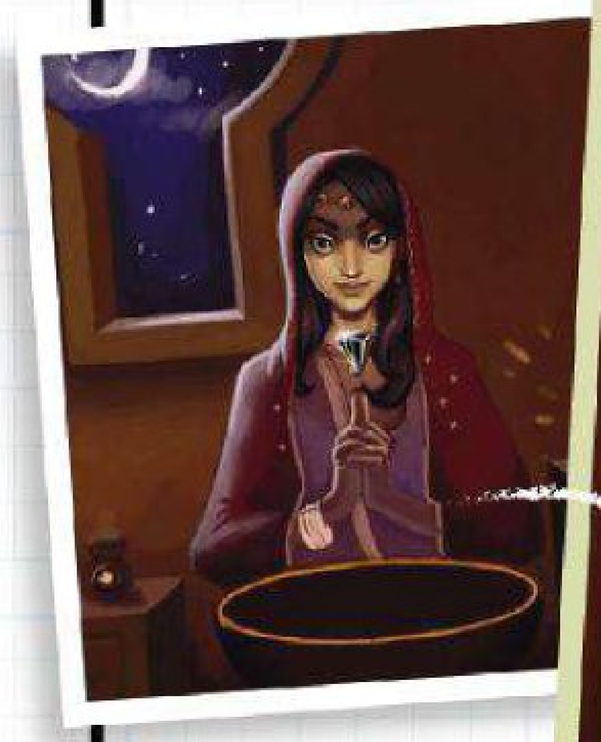
Luisa: I painted a curtain, but I'm not sure if it blends well with the rest of the painting...

Bill: Try painting a curtain pulled away from the window with a satin rope tie – it stays within the composition lines before by forming part of a triangle against the tilted angle of the window.

The end result



"I think you've done great, Luisa! There's a warmth and mystery to the whole thing that's very enchanting! I like the way that you've made this image your own and integrated my advice into your own style."
Bill Corbett





What did Luisa learn?



"I've always drawn characters randomly floating into a single-coloured background, so it was refreshing to paint an actual scene."

blog.luisarafidi.com

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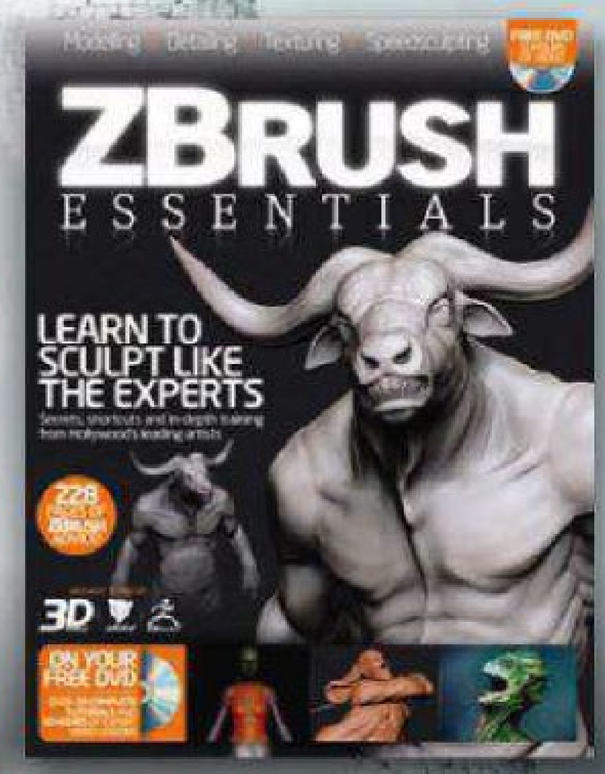
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Turn to page 33

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

Back issues

Missed an issue of ImagineFX? Call our hotline right now and pick up a past issue before they sell out...

Issue 65 January 2011



Blast off into outer space with our A-Z of sci-fi art, from aliens to zero-gravity girls, and read about the techniques used to create art that's out of this world. We also talk to comic legend Moebius about his career and show how to design a TRON-inspired light cycle.

Issue 66 February 2011



Learn how to incorporate free art programs GIMP and SketchUp into your workflow, be inspired by the techniques used by Ashley Wood and follow Justin Gerard's guide to drawing. Plus master fantasy artist Charles Vess explains his enchanting style!

Issue 67 March 2011

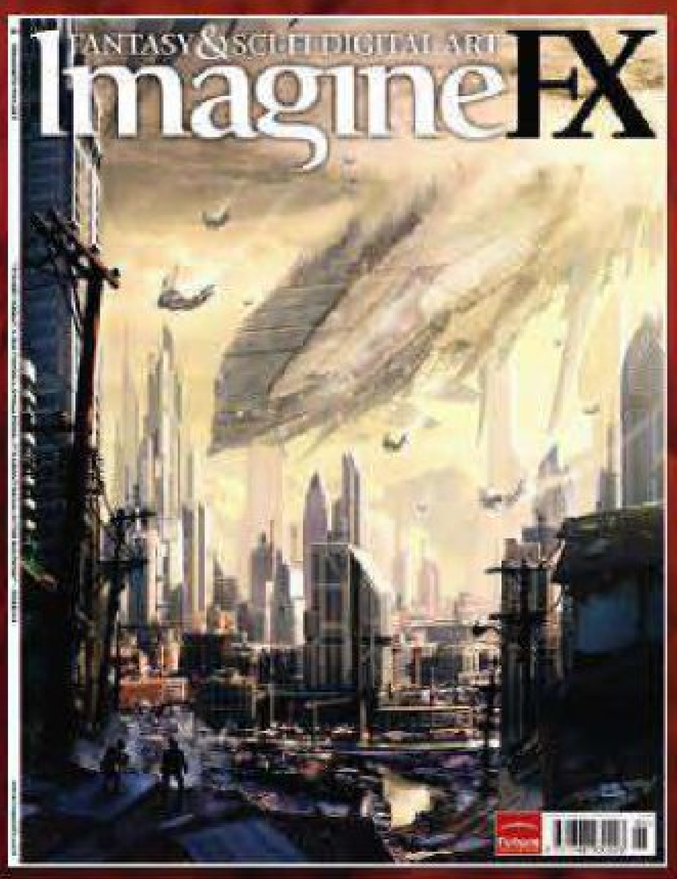


Adam Hughes's glorious Catwoman cover heralds a comic book special this month, as we look at Bill Sienkiewicz's groundbreaking art, DC's iconic covers and Jim Lee's sketchbook. And if you've ever wanted to give photo-collage a try, now's your chance.

Issue 68 April 2011



Discover how to use perspective in your art, create traditional-looking images and inject a feeling of real action into detailed battle scenes. We also chat to concept artist Joel Chang, whose work appears in the fantastic film Sucker Punch, the inspiration behind this issue.



Issue 69 May 2011

Epic new size, epic poster and art legends giving advice on creating epic landscapes – did we mention the theme was epic? Plus we meet Dylan Cole, artist on the movie Avatar.

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ESTAOG
"I don't often try my hand at fantasy, but this piece for an online challenge was a lot of fun."
Close

> ❝ If I don't have fun doing it, then who's going to enjoy looking at it? ❞

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Artist Portfolio

MARCO MAZZONI

Marco's dramatic sci-fi scenes are impressive, but you might recognise his name from a totally different image altogether...

Marco Mazzoni loves to depict the moments of crisis when humans overreach in outer space. Filled with tension and imminent disaster, few content faces will be found in his art. But this isn't part of an overarching approach by the artist. It's much simpler than that. "Regardless of the subject matter," says Marco, "I always try to have something weird or unexpected going on in the piece to generate interest."

Having studied traditional art at Mesa Community College in Phoenix, Arizona, Marco's approach to art was changed forever by an inspiring lecturer. "I was fortunate enough to have an awesome instructor: Jim Garrison," he says. "Jim turned me on to Conceptart.org, which was founded by one of his former students, Jason Manley." This inspired Marco to pick up a tablet and start applying his traditional training to the digital medium. It's through interaction with the community and participation in the challenges at ConceptArt.org that Marco found his groove in digital art. "Soon I was participating in the site's weekly challenges, which pretty much brought my skills up to industry standard."

As well as developing his digital chops, his involvement in the site also led to his first full-time professional art job. He was hired as a concept artist for CCP Games back in 2008, thanks in part to a recommendation by fellow artist Trevor Claxton. "We admired each other's work on ConceptArt for a while," Marco says, "and when we noticed we were both working on the same challenge we got in touch and exchanged images and ass-pats." Trevor mentioned that his employer in Atlanta was "looking for more art monkeys, and wanted to know if I was busy for the next few years." Marco got the job, and Trevor and he have been close friends ever since.

IT'S NOT ABOUT ABOUT EVE

CCP is best known for its massively multiplayer space opera EVE, which might imply that Marco would spend most of his time dreaming up grand sci-fi concepts. But, he says, much of his work focuses on creating a cohesive world in a more contemporary setting. "My personal work is very different to my professional work, but mostly in subject matter," he explains. "At home I prefer going off on science fiction tangents. Inevitably there is a faster turnaround pressure at work that doesn't allow for the experimentation in technique that I can get with personal stuff, but I'm able to bring the results of that exploration back into the office the next day."

He's happy to admit that the limited time he gets to work on personal projects isn't always spent in the best way it could be. "I do make it a point to meet up with artists from work at least once a week, though, where we often collaborate on personal projects," he says. "Our art department has recently established regular life drawing sessions at the office, which has been a very satisfying outlet as well. I'm also fairly picky about what freelance work I take on, so most of the time what I'm working on is something I enjoy anyway."

Artist PROFILE

Marco Mazzoni

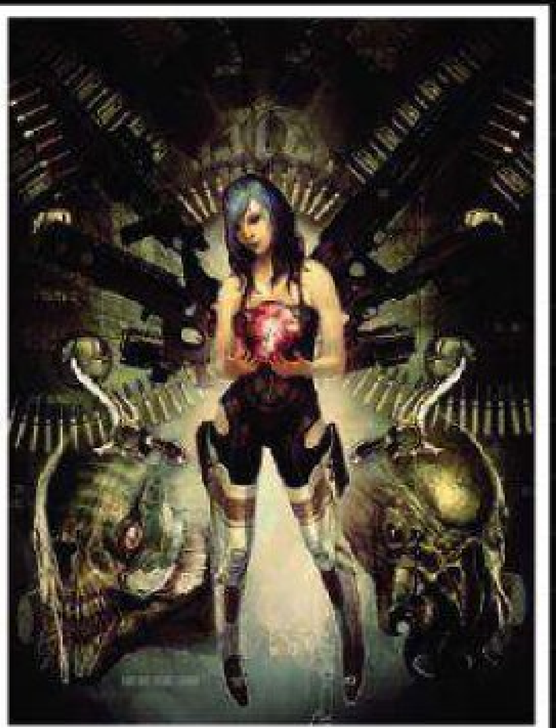


COUNTRY: US

FAVOURITE ARTISTS:
Jaime Jones, Carlo Arellano, Wesley Burt, Ruan Jia Gabriel Garza, Juan Gimenez

SOFTWARE USED:
Photoshop, Sketchbook

WEB: marcomazzoni.cghub.com



UNVEILED THREATS *"This was my first cover! It's a weapons supplement for Cthulhutech, so I went with a ballistics collage."*

Close

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Gallery



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SURVEILLANCE *"Even though both characters are in different places, I really wanted it to look like they were reacting to each other through these augmented reality screens."* Close

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PREDATORY BEHAVIOUR

In Marco's hands the intergalactic game hunter shows its saucy side

Much to his delight, Marco is perhaps best known for a throwaway image that became something of an internet meme during 2009. He created Sexual Predator "as a gag during a lunch break, based on an immature play on words". It got a few laughs in the office and he thought little more about it.

"But soon I started seeing this thing posted on all sorts of pop culture and humour blogs," he says. "Over 130,000 hits to my CGHub link later and you can now Google 'Marco Mazzoni' or 'Sexual Predator' and you'll get the same image. It's certainly not the classiest thing I've done, but I still get a damn good laugh every time I see it posted somewhere."

Comments



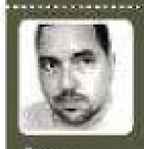
Beren Neale
ImagineFX

"This is hilarious because of the love and attention to detail. Look at the wrist-gizmo message, or those arm freckles – woof! And, like all great sci-fi art, it makes you question your sexuality: pit bulls or bullfrogs? There is no wrong answer..."



Trevor Claxton
Pro artist

"Sexual Predator began as a Post-it note left stuck to my Cintique at work and quickly became this masterpiece... What I like about Marco's work is that he can take unconventional ideas and turn them into incredibly cool concepts."



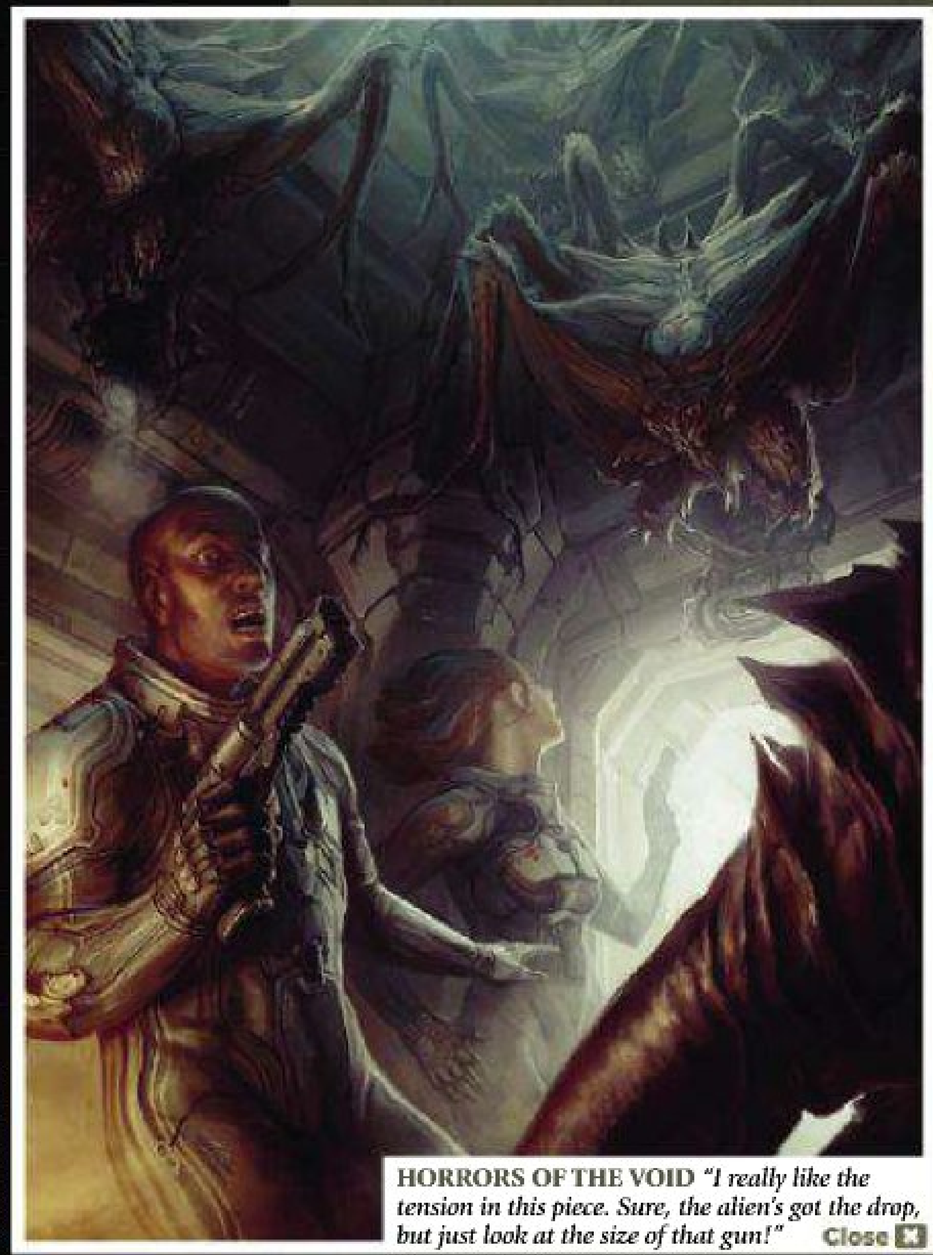
Dave Brasgalla
IFX reader

"Marco's found a great gag here, one that was always bound to be a hit internet meme. It's funny and – perhaps unfortunately - unforgettable. I think I was better off when the Predator simply wanted to kill me..."



DEATH *"This was a part of a space-themed tarot deck where astronomy replaced astrology."* Close

MARCO MAZZONI



© 2010 Wild Fire LLC

HORRORS OF THE VOID *"I really like the tension in this piece. Sure, the alien's got the drop, but just look at the size of that gun!"* Close



© 2010 WildFire LLC

KNIGHTS ERRANT *"This was done for Cthonian Stars and was inspired by the movie Event Horizon."* Close

It's all a long way from his first paid gig: doing wildlife illustrations for the Arizona Game and Fish Department, of all things. He says that this work is "pretty embarrassing" to look at now, but it did teach him some aspects of animal anatomy which he still employs.

PAINTING STYLISED REALITY

In terms of process, he generally begins with line art to establish composition and designs, builds up the volumes and then moves on to colour. "My impatience keeps me from spending too much time blending, and my lack of confidence with colour means I spend more time with that," he adds. "I still like to challenge myself in both of these areas though, to stay fresh. The overall goal is to achieve a kind of stylised realism."

This, he believes, comes through practice, and lots of it. "Saying a professional has to be naturally gifted in their field to succeed is almost dismissive of how hard they had work to get there," he rails. "If they're genuinely interested in something and focused on improving, anyone can do it. Some artists have good intentions, but fall short when they don't open themselves up to honest critique or take the time to analyse their process. Just wagging your Wacom pen at your tablet without critical thinking is no better than pointing your face at a book and calling it reading."

In that same spirit, Marco tries to be his harshest critic, likening the process of self-improvement to trying to beat a personal high score in a game. The alternative – settling for a piece with weaknesses – may be easier, but he finds it boring and, indeed, counter-productive in the long run. "After all, if I don't have fun doing it, then who's going to enjoy looking at it?"

He's convinced his time with CCP has contributed immeasurably to his growth as an artist and isn't looking to move on, professionally speaking, any time soon. On the other hand, he's not completely blind to new opportunities. "My approach has always been to set a long-term goal, stay flexible and take the path of least resistance to it," he says. "But I have always had a deep love for film and the art that goes into it… Hey, maybe that could be my new long-term goal!"



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AIRLOCK *"This guy just came back from a spacewalk and he can't get back in the ship fast enough. There's something out there!"* Close

Gallery



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Development sheet

PROJECT TITLE: MONSTER BIRD DESIGN

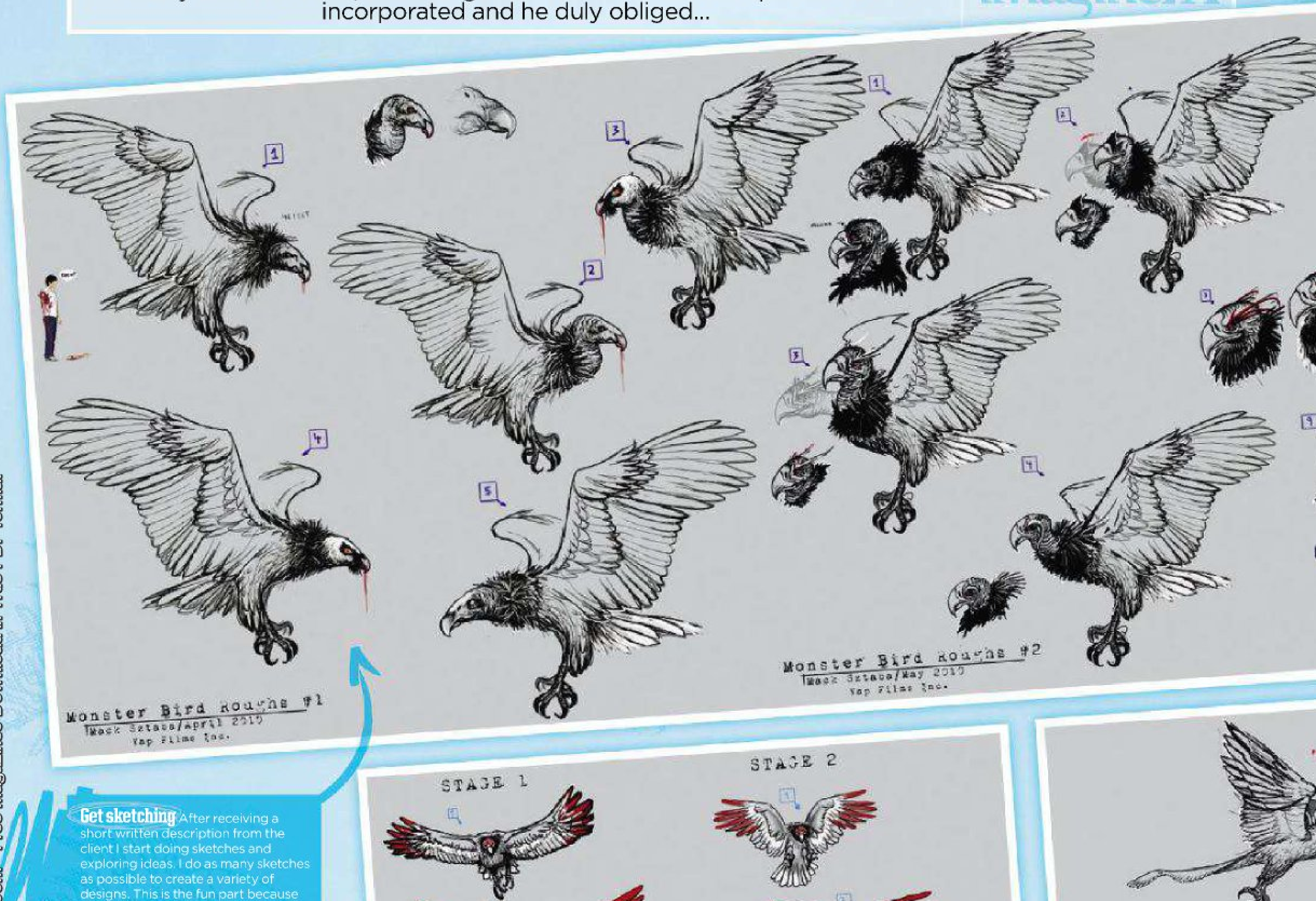
Freelance concept artist **Mack Sztaba** designed this monstrous bird for the History Channel show, Beast Legends. The client wanted specific colours incorporated and he duly obliged...

Artist PROFILE

Mack Sztaba



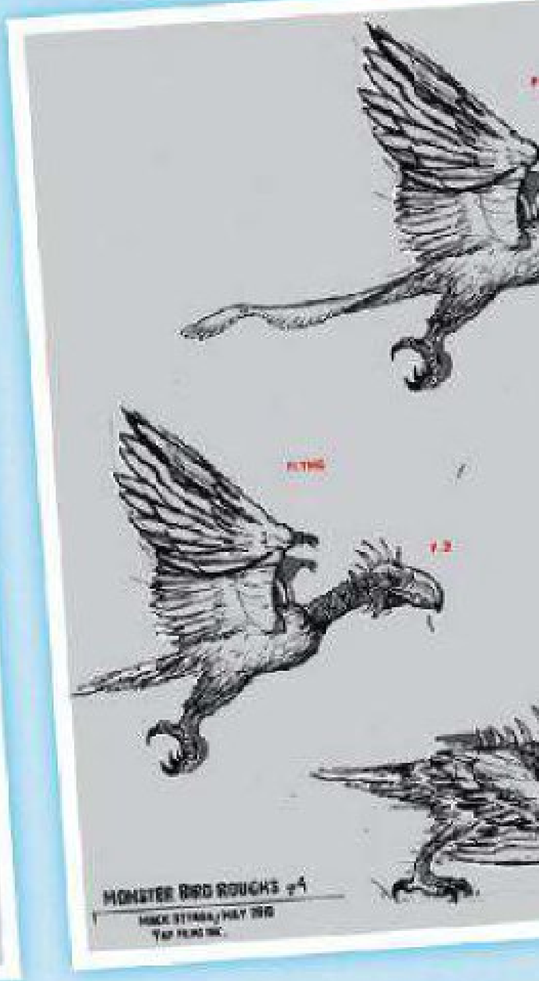
Canada-based Mack has been studying art since his early years. He works as a freelance concept designer in the film and video games industries, and previous clients include Wizards of the Coast, Yap Films and Invisible Pictures. At the moment Mack's busy pursuing his other passion – becoming a storyboard artist.
www.mackart.ca



Get sketching After receiving a short written description from the client I start doing sketches and exploring ideas. I do as many sketches as possible to create a variety of designs. This is the fun part because I'm able to focus purely on design.

Colour patterns The client wanted specific colours on the wings, so I drew a few variations of different colour patterns, using only these set colours.





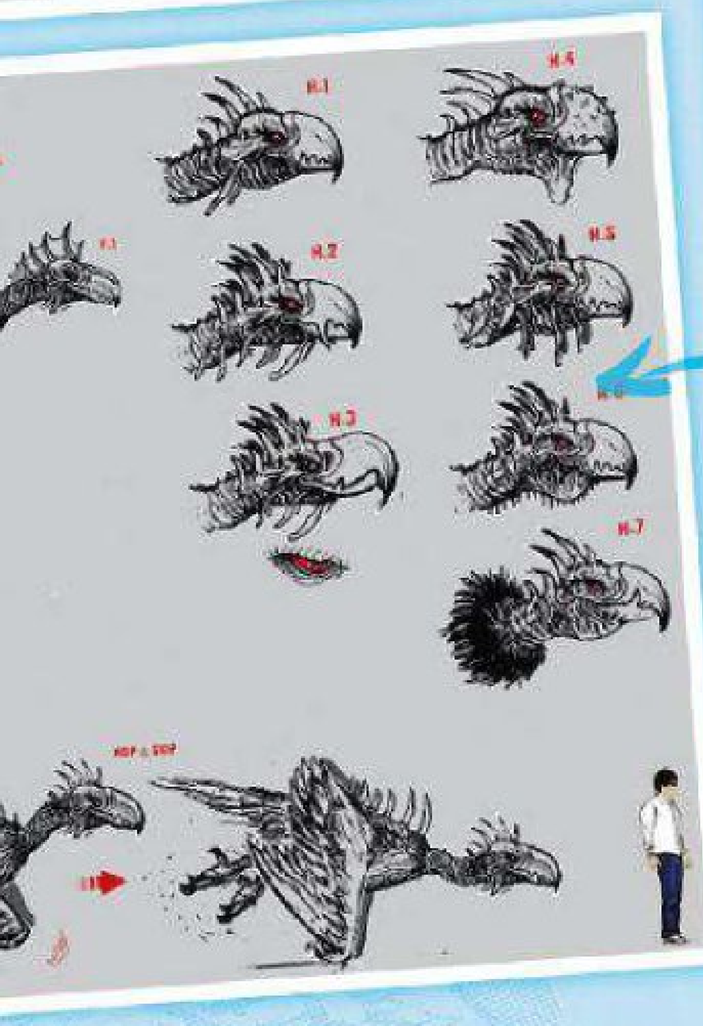
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Fleshing out the bird After the client has chosen a design I move onto the final render. I mainly use generic round brushes in Photoshop with textures thrown in on Overlay layers. For the head of the bird I used a combination of leather textures.

Presenting the design Once the bird is finished I add a human for scale. This is very important, for obvious reasons. Next I add a closer view of the head and a top view of the colour pattern on the wings. Presentation is key in design: you want everything to read clearly. Then I move onto an orthographic view. This is created for the 3D modellers, so they can sculpt the design. After that I can sit back, breathe deeply and get going on my next design!

SEND US YOUR CONCEPTS!

Are you working on a project, or doodling your own development sketches that you'd like to share with us?

LET US KNOW! Email your WIPs and final images to: **develop@imaginefx.com**

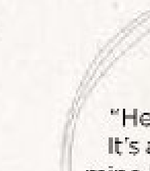
Storeking.com

Larry MacDougall

Don't be fooled by the children's illustrator tag – not all these fairy-tale stalwarts are suitable for bedtime stories

Artist PROFILE

Larry MacDougall



Larry is an award-winning fantasy illustrator. He began his career several decades ago designing characters and environments for games such as Dungeons & Dragons, Shadowrun and Vampire: The Masquerade. He then moved into children's publishing, and is now illustrating a series of books on Arctic mythology for Inhabit Media.
mythwood.blogspot.com

TROLL HEADS

"Here we have a page of them. It's another favourite subject of mine because there's no end to the variations you can try while designing these mythical characters. All manner of extreme exaggeration is perfectly acceptable. Dream away..."

GIANT

"A few years ago, I had the good fortune to work on a book called The Secret History of Giants for Templar Publishing. For a good while it was my job to think of nothing but giants. When the project was over, I was still thinking about them, and that's when I drew this fellow. Actually, I'm still thinking about giants."

ElenaKagan.com

WITCH

"I was picturing myself on a lonely trail in the dark forest. All of a sudden this witch steps out onto the path in front of me... grinning. This was drawn straight from the imagination. I was going for the visceral effect of the witch and her very big teeth."

"All manner of extreme exaggeration is perfectly acceptable. Dream away..."

MORE WARM-UPS

"Another page of warm-up doodles – faeries and other supernatural characters. My approach with these is to start drawing with absolutely nothing in mind and simply see what the pencil lines turn into. You guide the pencil but allow it to go its own way as well. It's a process Jeff Jones calls 'dream a drawing'. You have to be relaxed."

storeking.com

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Sketchbook

WITCH

"Some preliminary design work for a fairytale project I'm illustrating. The story has changed since I drew this character, but I still like her and hope to find an appropriate place for her one day."

GOBLINS

"This is some pre-production work for another Templar book entitled The Secret History of Hobgoblins. This was at the beginning of the project, when we thought we might be taking a look at some of the more sinister goblins."

"This drawing came about while doodling in search of ideas that might become paintings"

WITCH COTTAGE 2

"I wouldn't venture too close to this particular dwelling. There's a large pile of bones out back."

MOVING

"A hill giant has been employed by a witch to move her cottage deeper into the forest. He isn't crazy about the idea, but she is powerful and he doesn't have much of a choice. This drawing came about while doodling in search of ideas that may possibly one day become paintings. It was suggested to me that we might also be able to see the witch. I agree."

Want to share your sketches? Or know an artist you'd like to see featured in Sketchbook? Then drop us an email at **sketchbook@imaginefx.com**, or upload your sketches at **www.imaginefx.com/sketchbook**.

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FXPosé Traditional

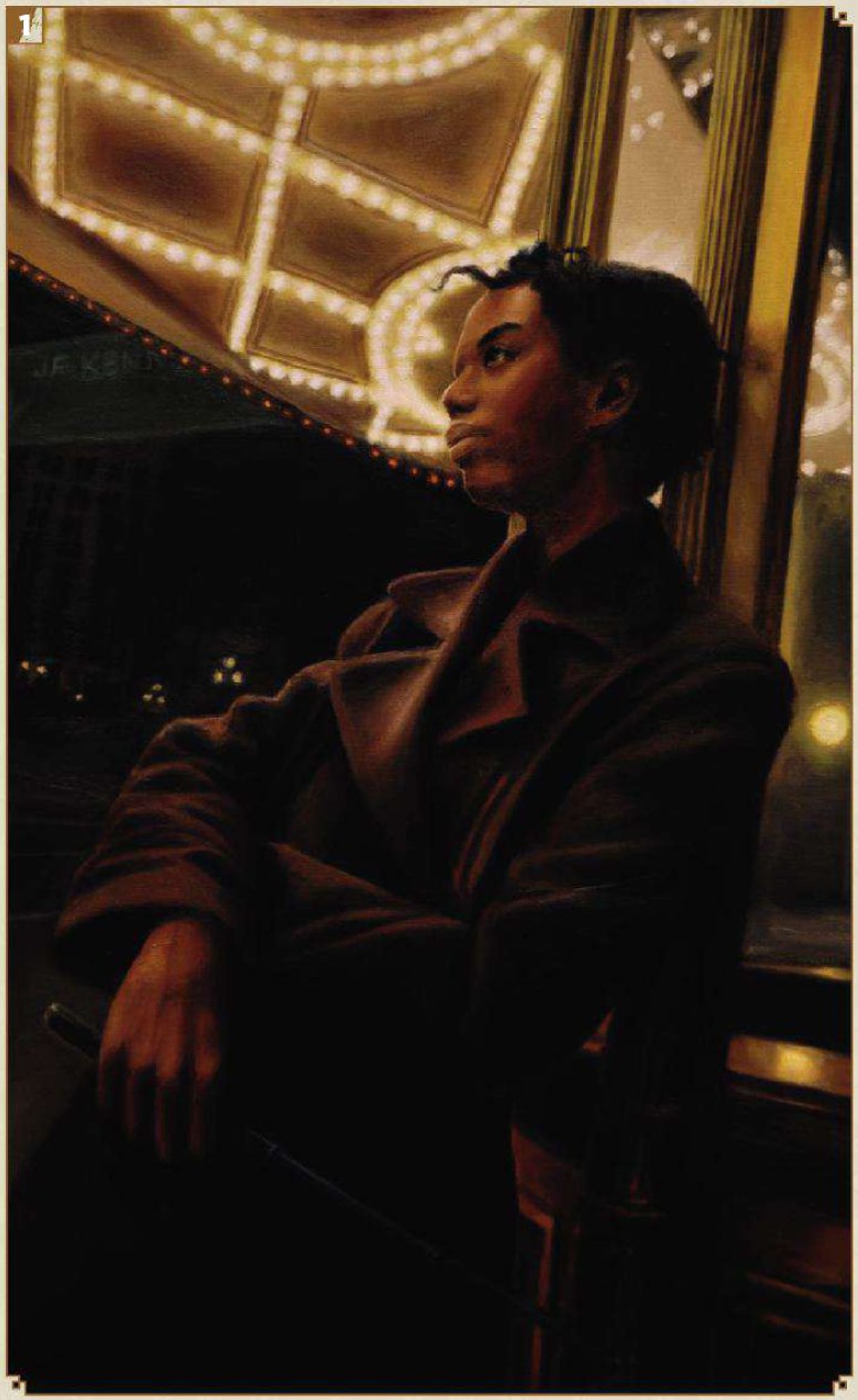
SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL FANTASY ARTISTS

Julia Griffin
LOCATION: US
WEB: www.juliagriffinart.com
EMAIL: madainn@gmail.com
MEDIA: Pencil, oils



"I grew up in Amherst, Massachusetts, where my parents and teachers encouraged my love of books, drawing and the fantastic," says Julia. In fact, it was classic myths and fairy tales that first inspired her to start drawing. "Often I would try to put on paper the vivid images left in my head by these stories," she tells us, "and soon began to look at the world around me as a collection of shapes, colours and light."

Honing her drawing skills in Connecticut College, Julia also developed a love for "obsessive pencil rendering." She now lives in New York and is making serious inroads into creating covers for fantasy and young adult novels.



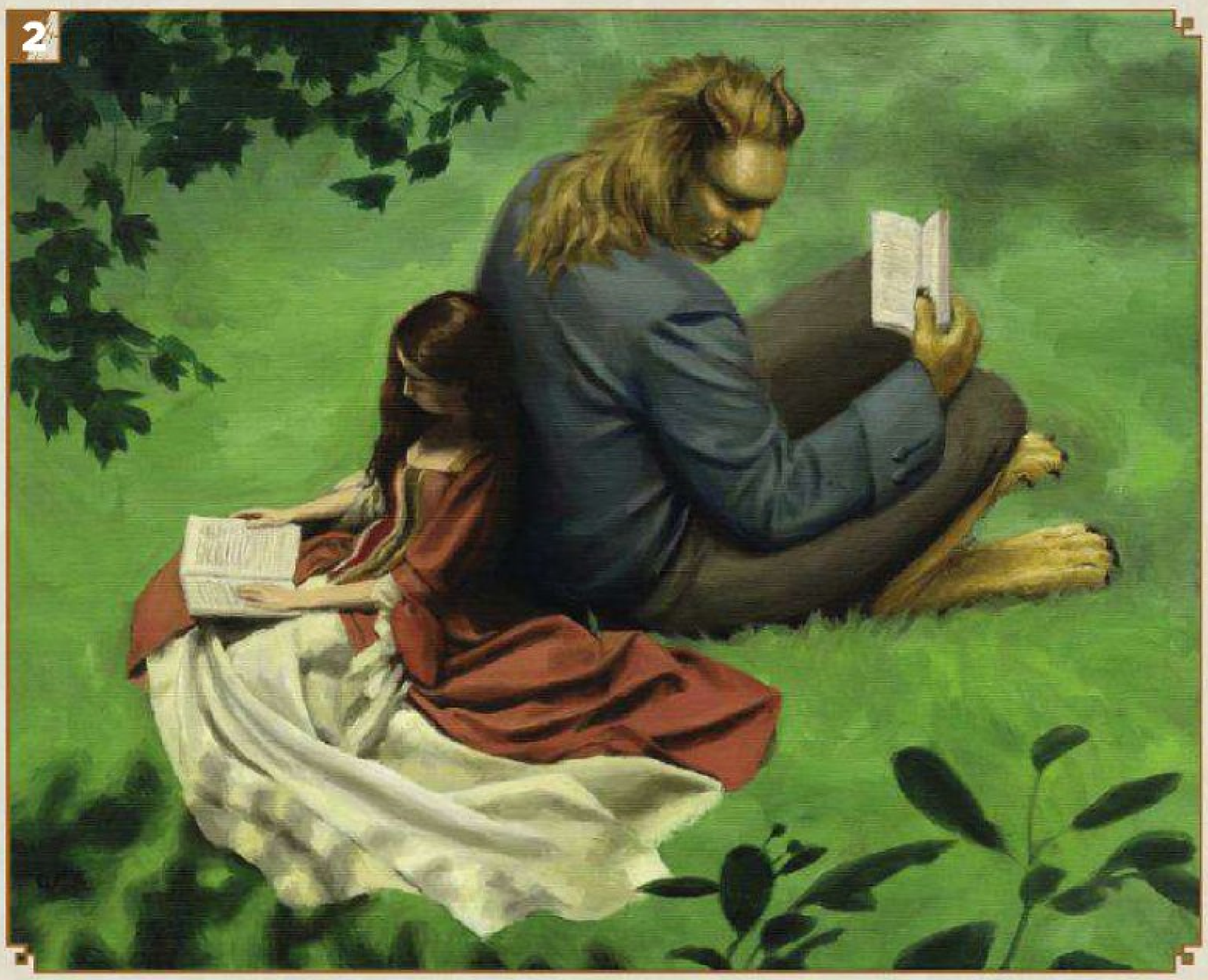
1 AGENT 355
18x24in, oils
"I painted this portrait of Agent 355 from Brian K Vaughn's Y: the Last Man. She's a wonderful, strong character and I wanted to show her enjoying a moment of quiet – something she doesn't get much of a chance to do in the comic."

2 BEAUTY & BEAST
16x20in, oils
"Beauty and the Beast is a favourite fairy tale of mine because we see how the protagonists actually fall in love. With this painting I wanted to show their developing friendship. They're beginning to trust each other and feel comfortable with each other."

3 THE INVENTOR
11x13in, oils
"In this painting an inventor is putting the finishing touches on a tiny clock."

4 ARTEMIS
10.5x14in, coloured pencils
"Here, I've depicted Artemis hunting a white doe. The Greek goddess has always fascinated me as a tomboy of sorts, concerned with little besides the hunt. I wanted to capture a moment of pure concentration, her focus on the deer is so intense that her surroundings begin to fade. It's just her and the deer."

2

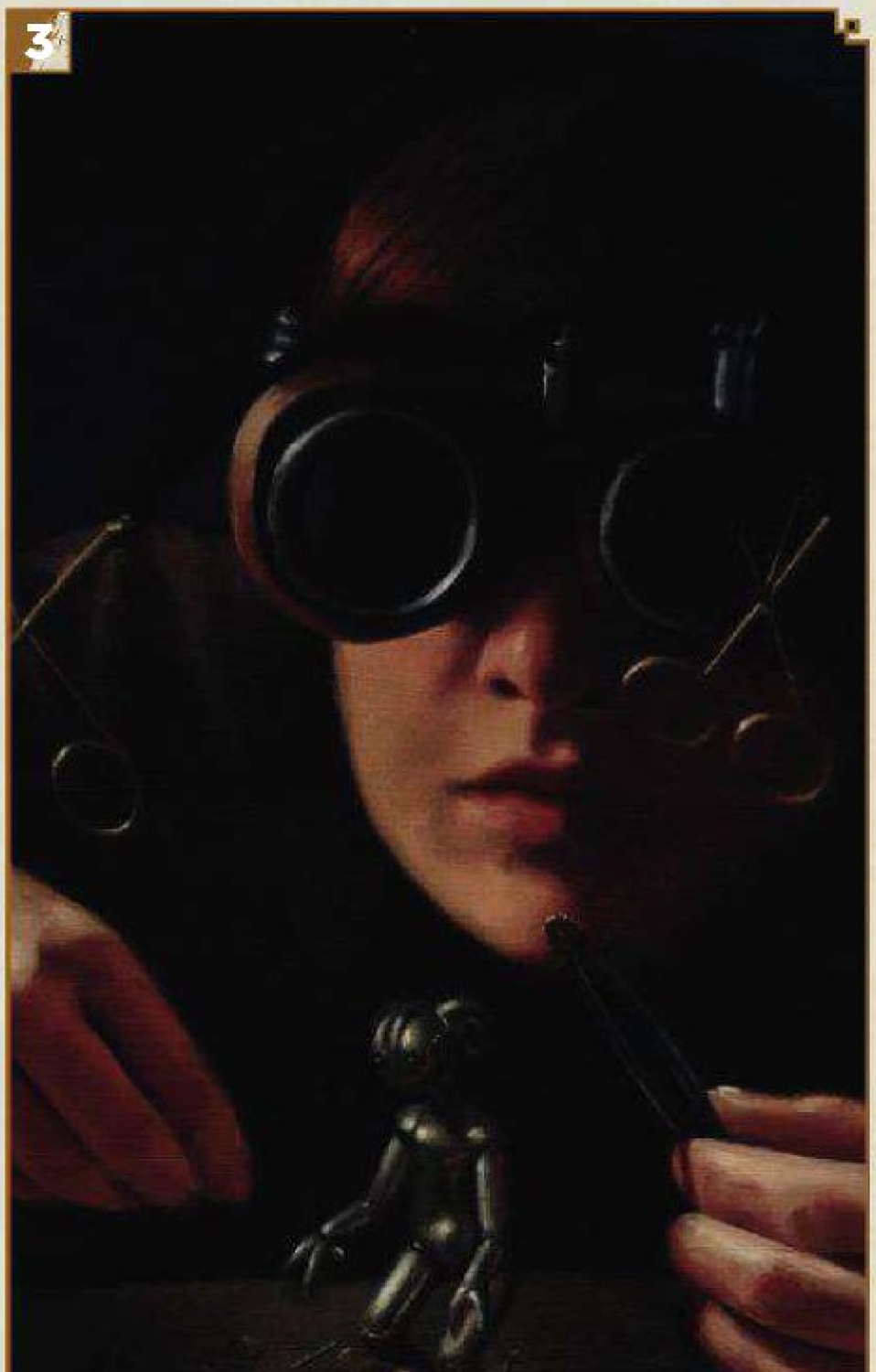


IMAGINEFX CRIT



"There's a strong set of images here, but my eyes keep reverting back to take in Agent 355. I love how the bright lights bounce off Agent 355, the shadows and the folds in her fabric."
Claire Howlett, Editor

3



4



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Rebecca Sinz

LOCATION: US
WEB: www.elvenstarart.com
EMAIL: rebeccasinz@gmail.com
MEDIA: Watercolour with some gouache and coloured pencil



Rebecca fell in love with watercolours when she first tried them in 2003, and "I've yet to find another medium that suits me nearly as well," she says. "I love to create a dark, moody atmosphere with a touch of mystery, and I want people to look at my subjects and wonder what the story is, or as in a few cases, make up their own to go with it."

Rebecca often turns to nature for inspiration, painting storms and elemental goddesses, earthy fairies and other fantasy beings. "I've always loved to create," she says, "and being a fantasy artist enables me to make anything I can imagine take form."

IMAGINEFX CRIT

"Anyone who recasts the traditional woodland fairy as a trained killer is worth a closer look. Couple this lateral thinking with a clever use of colour and it's clear that Rebecca's art is one to watch."
Cliff Hope, Operations Editor

1



2



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fxpose@imaginefx.com

SEND YOUR ARTWORK TO:
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ImagineFX
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Bath, BA1 2BW
UK

1 THE PUMPKIN QUEEN
8x12in, watercolour, white gouache
"This was one of those images that popped into my head fully formed. I'd wanted to paint a Halloween-themed painting and this queen came to me, sitting on her pumpkin throne summoning spirits. It was inspired some by Tim Burton's The Nightmare Before Christmas."

2 THE WHITE ROSE
12x9in, watercolour, gouache, pencil
"Here's my favourite version of my character, Elekcis. This fairy assassin is much more dangerous than she appears. She's seen here before a stained glass window of a white rose, to which she's often compared because of her beauty and pallor, but beware of her thorns."

3 ENCHANTED EVENING
8x10in, watercolour, gouache, pencil
"A Victorian-era vampire luring in a victim from behind her fan. She's painted in a monochromatic blue colour scheme. I love to use a limited palette. It really helps to set the mood of a painting. In the case of this one, adding an alluring mysterious air."

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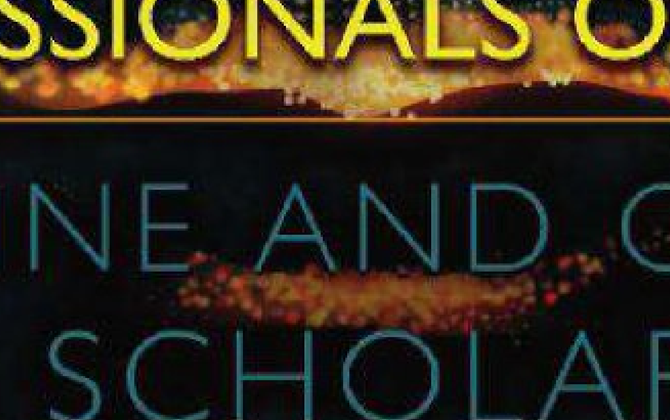
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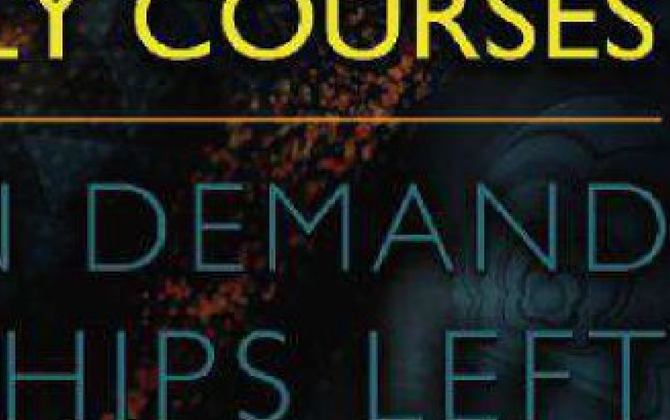
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Advice from the world's best artists



This issue:

72 Revolutionise your approach to art
Andrew Jones reveals what inspires him to inject new life into his work.

76 Find the ideal reference material
James Gurney gives his advice on sourcing the references that best serve your picture's needs.

84 Create a realistic fantasy female
Marta Dahlig explains how to paint a female that doesn't conform to stereotypes.

89 Selections and transformations
ArtRage offers more manipulation tools than you may think. Simon Dominic helps you discover them.

90 Loosen up your painting style
Loïc Zimmermann has a few nifty tips for giving your images an 'on the fly' look.

96 Generate quick environment art
Annis Naeem creates a concept painting with a larger-than-life fantasy scene.

100 Convey the feel of natural media
Nicole Cardiff combines several elements to give her work an illustrative look.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART ImagineFX

TOP Ten

WAYS TO REVOLUTIONISE YOUR DIGITAL ART

Going beyond standard painting advice, visionary artist **Andrew Jones** lays down his manifesto for true art success

Artist PROFILE

Andrew Jones

COUNTRY: US



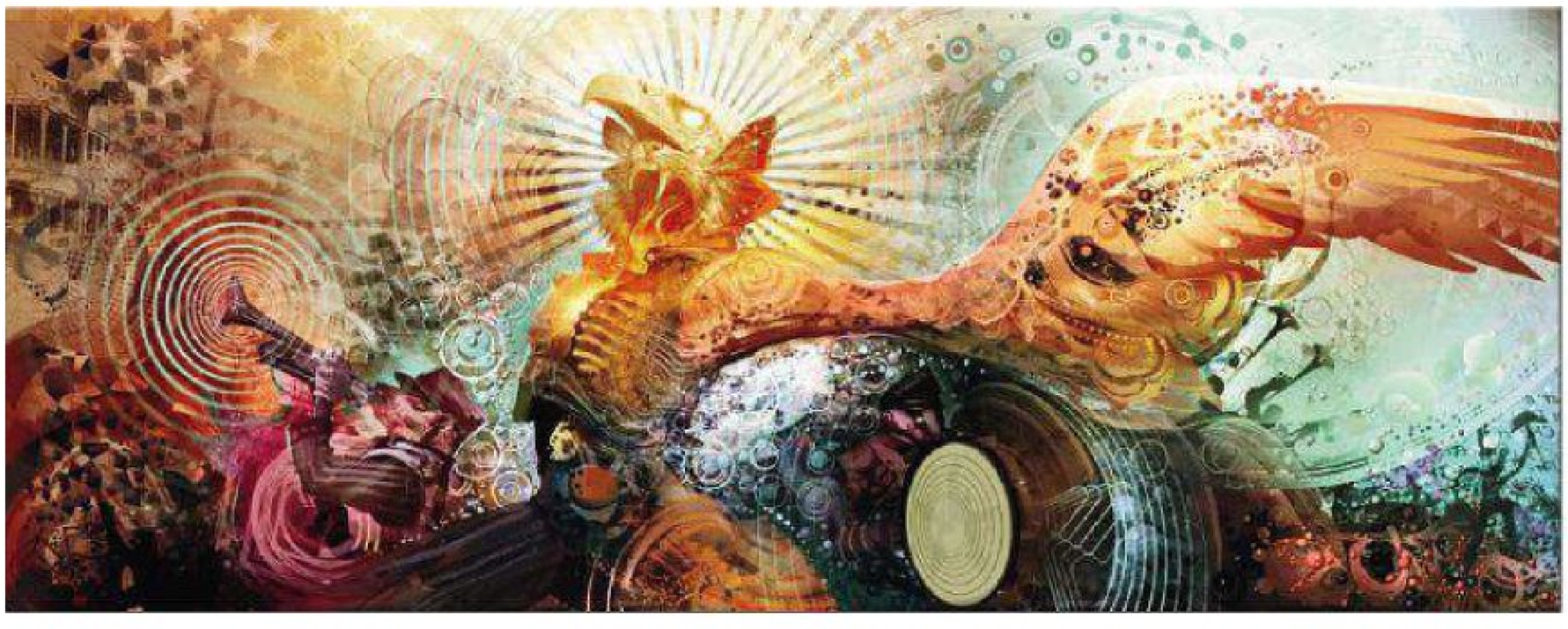
The ex-ILM artist helped set up Massive Black, but later left the company to plough his own furrow in the wider art world.

www.androidjones.com

Revolution means 'a turn around'. It's a fundamental change in power or structure that occurs in a short period of time. The revolution we're interested in here, though, is the revolution inside you – at the heart of which you'll find a motivating ideology, the driving force behind your actions.

The following points won't help you to 'become' this ideology. Instead, they're meant to inspire you to create your own. Revolution takes discipline – and all your potential and talent is worthless without the commitment to see it through. Before you choose to embark on the journey though, it's important to be clear on what you're fighting for and what you're revolting against – where you want to go and what you're willing to leave behind.

The digital art that you create is a reflection of yourself. It's an accumulation of your life, your surroundings, your programming and your consciousness. Your revolution, when it comes, will be sparked by your inner voice that can finally make itself heard.



10 TAKE YOUR JOB AND SHOVE IT

You're tired of working for a boss or a company that cares more about profit than it does about you. But if you're looking for a new opportunity, you have to close one door before a new door will open. Sacrifice your security and take a leap into the unknown. It may seem scary, but what's more frightening than living your life supporting something that you don't believe in? There isn't a better time than this very moment to follow your dreams. The best art director is your heart.

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Top Ten Revolutionise your digital art

9 RE-EVALUATE YOUR SURROUNDINGS

Kill your television. By limiting your exposure to the gibberish of modern pop culture, you'll allow more space for your imagination to breathe and be able to hear your own unique voice more clearly. All the great masters created timeless works of art by stepping out of their own time. And as tempting as it is, if you draw your inspiration from the work of other artists, you're bound to be caught within the established perimeters of their imagination. Finding your own voice is the key to the realm of infinite creativity.

8 FIND SOME SUPPORT

Nobody wins a revolution by themselves alone. You are not alone. There are more people out there who believe in your skills than you may think. The support of those who love you and see your work will become invaluable as you tread the path of a professional artist. The more you believe in yourself, the more the world will believe in you.

7 BECOME VULNERABLE

The comfort zone you operate in can quickly stifle your creativity. You'll never reach higher if you always stay at the same elevation. I still grow nervous when performing or speaking in front of large audiences, but over the years I've found that my greatest breakthroughs happen more on the stage than in the studio. Your fear can be an indicator that you may be on the brink of a breakthrough. If you don't put it all on the line you'll never know what you've really got. The only real failure is not trying.

6 ELEVATE YOUR SENSES

Everything around you will have a direct or indirect influence on what you create. Taking time to clear the accumulated clutter that can build up around your workspace can free up your headspace.

Music has been a muse for artists throughout the centuries. I've found that a mixture of classical and electronic down-tempo soothes the savage beast within. I recommend music that's free of any lyrics, which can send your subconscious in directions that may not serve you.







5 ENTER THE DREAM

Every night we enter a realm beyond logic, beyond rules, beyond explanations. We interact with subconscious elements of ourselves, and receive messages beyond our comprehension. Yet many of these mental fantasies are vanquished by our alarm clocks. Log on to **www.dreamcatcher.net** and start recording your adventures into dreamland. This could give you numerous creative points of departure that come from a source you can't even define.



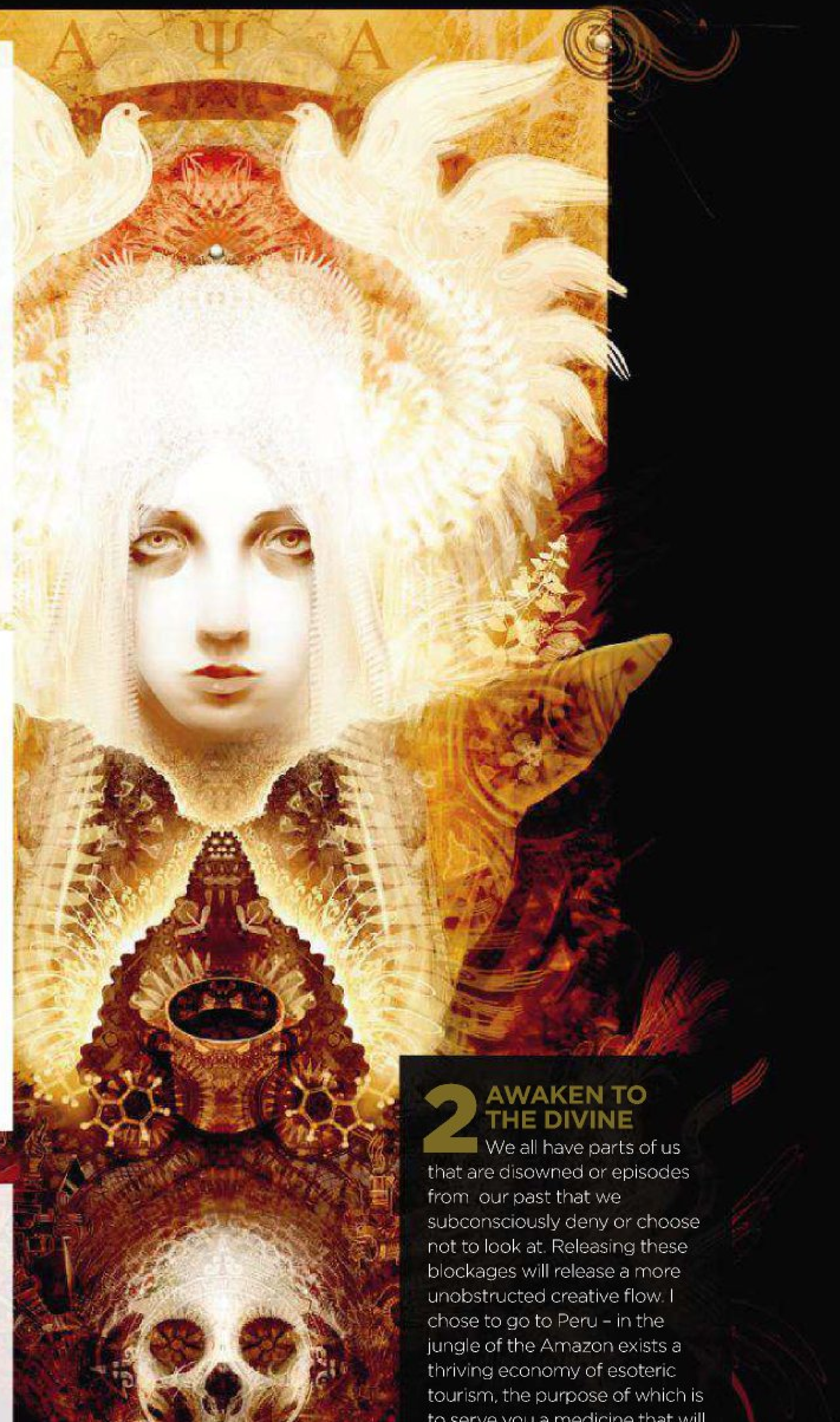
4 LEARN TO MEDITATE

The force that will always hold you back the most is you. The aspects of yourself that sabotage your potential, the inner critic who second guesses your every choice and allows you to settle for mediocrity, is what you need to identify and banish from your reality. The practice of meditation and stillness will help to isolate this impostor, so you may recognise its ranting in contrast to your true voice.



3 FALL IN LOVE

Love can illuminate the highest reflection of yourself in the reflection of the one that loves you. The more you love another, the more you'll love yourself. The more you learn about that love, the more you can put that wisdom into your digital art. Dismiss the romantic mythology of the lonely, starving artist and embrace the archetype of a provider that makes more when there's someone else to feed. An inspired heart brings new inspiration to the work.



2 AWAKEN TO THE DIVINE

We all have parts of us that are disowned or episodes from our past that we subconsciously deny or choose not to look at. Releasing these blockages will release a more unobstructed creative flow. I chose to go to Peru – in the jungle of the Amazon exists a thriving economy of esoteric tourism, the purpose of which is to serve you a medicine that will open you to a source of inspiration that exists beyond any explanation or definition. After my initial experiences in Peru I was inspired to create the image of the Divine Mother. This image was selected for the cover of Spectrum, launching a new direction for my career.

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> "You need to banish from your reality the inner critic who second guesses your every choice and allows you to settle for mediocrity"

1 EMBRACE YOUR INNER ELECTRON

Recent discoveries in modern science have revealed that what we perceive as the material world is actually energy that's condensed to a slow vibration. The external reality is holographic in nature. As digital artists our medium is the manipulation of light and energy. Our tools are the results of millions of years of evolution. Digital art isn't an accident. It's a new vehicle for the current manifestation of the creative spirit. Step up to its invitation.

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FIND THE IDEAL REFERENCE FOR YOUR PAINTING



James Gurney uses all kinds of real-world reference material to create his amazing fantasy art. There's more to it than simply going on Google...

Artist PROFILE

James Gurney
COUNTRY: US



James is the author of Dinotopia. His books Color and Light and Imaginative Realism have been Amazon's no.1 and no.2 best-selling books on painting.
gurneyjourney.blogspot.com

DVD Assets

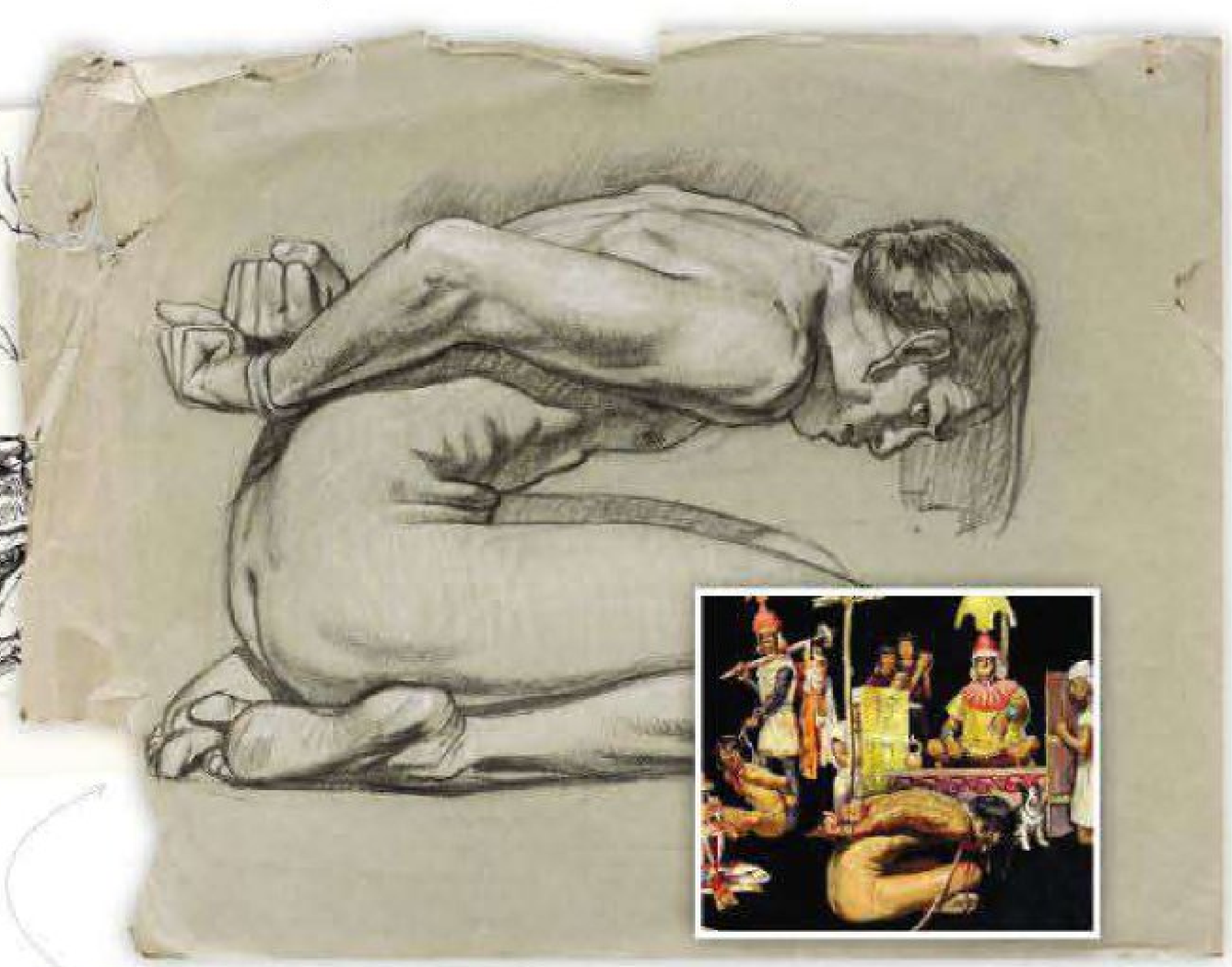
James's reference files and two video clips can be found on this month's DVD, in the Workshop section.

Some fantasy artists avoid using image reference altogether. Instead, they choose to work from what's inside their heads, achieving good results along the way. A lot of comic artists, storyboarders and concept artists can draw almost anything from a well-stocked visual memory. Others enlist models to pose for them, but base their images on charcoal studies rather than photos. Some artists use photo reference extensively, sometimes tracing over them.

I've tried all of these methods – it all depends on the requirements of the picture. Most of my professional work involves constructing realistic paintings of scenes that can't be photographed – historical scenes, dinosaur reconstructions or fantasy worlds.

There's no right or wrong method: the final result is what matters. I choose the process that suits my goal. Here are some examples that might help you decide on the kind of reference that best serves your own purpose for your pictures.





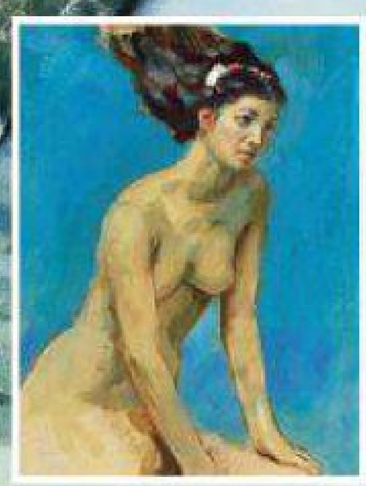
1 STARTING WITHOUT ANY REFERENCES

When I'm at the early stage of the design process, I try to forego reference. I find that my final image, no matter how much reference I eventually use, will only be 10 to 20 per cent better than my first pure thought. I get the best results when I invest a lot of thought in my initial thumbnails and try to make the reference match up with that vision as much as possible.

2 STUDIES FROM A MODEL

For a long time I resisted using photos for reference, preferring to use charcoal studies made directly from live models. The reason for this was that as a teenager, I ran across books about the methods of Norman Rockwell, Dean Cornwell and J C Leyendecker. I felt that each of them did their best work using studies rather than photos, so I tried to model my approach on theirs. This scene shows captured prisoners from the Moche culture of ancient Peru. It was developed entirely from studies from a model, not from photography.





3 MYTHOLOGICAL CHARACTERS

When it comes to mythological or storybook beings, I like to use drawn studies rather than photos, because I want to apply a different standard of realism to creatures that occupy a parallel universe. They don't exactly belong in our everyday world, so a photographic look can make them look too commonplace or mundane. For this mermaid, I based the painting on charcoal and oil studies from a live model. Using drawn studies enabled me to let my mental archetypes shape the final image.

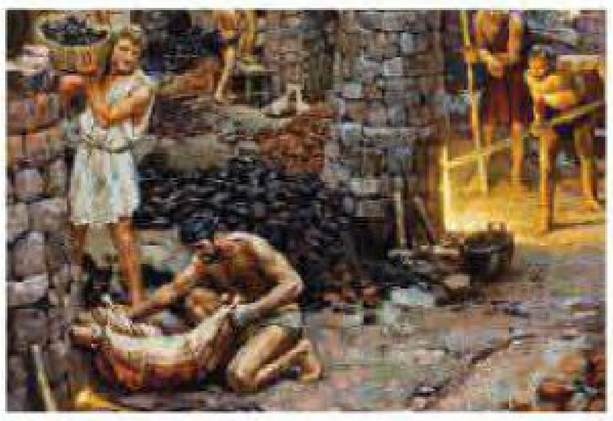
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4 TONE PAPER SECRETS

I did this study in the old-school style of drawing on light grey or tan paper, which gives an excellent surface for figure studies. The tone of the paper should be roughly equal to the darker half-tone – the point where the form turns away from the light just before it enters the shadow. You can begin either with vine charcoal or with a soft charcoal pencil and draw the pose lightly in line, noting the divide between the light and the shadow. Reserve the charcoal for the shadows and accents. The light side of the form can be defined with just a few careful touches of white chalk – save your strongest touches of white for highlights and accents.







5 REFLECTIONS ON MIRROR STUDIES

Posing in a full-length mirror is a great trick for quick studies, when all you want is the basic structure of the pose. I recommend it because it's often faster than shooting photo reference; it forces you to interpret the pose, making artistic decisions that give your work more coherence; and mirror studies have always been a favourite method for animators acting out facial expressions and gestures.



6 ACTING IN CHARACTER

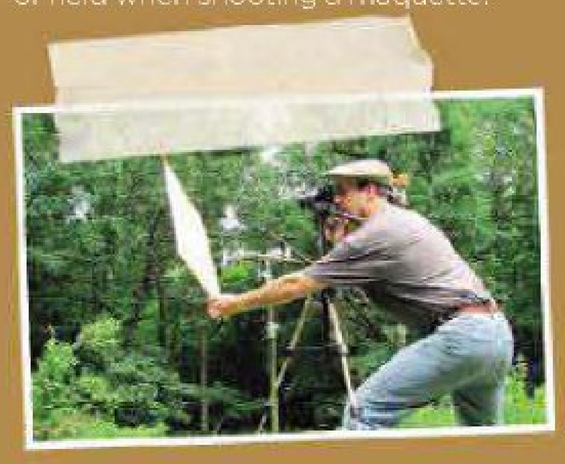
The more you project yourself into the character you're portraying, the more convincing your painting will be. You'll know which muscles are tensed and which leg is bearing the weight, for example. When I needed to create a warrior riding a dinosaur, I took the pose myself, wearing a wig and scowling in front of the mirror.

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USING PHOTOS SO THEY DON'T USE YOU

- Print photos in black and white to avoid being influenced by the colour.
- Use a white reflector to bounce light into the shadows in outdoor sunlight.
- Use a digital single-lens reflex camera with a small aperture long shutter speed to get maximum depth of field when shooting a maquette.



- Take lots of photos, and use more than one model or costume.
- When there's a scene with multiple kids, pose them together, and you'll get better interactions.
- Surround your painting with many different photos so that you're not influenced by just one.
- Surround your painting with all sorts of reference materials.
- If you're overly influenced by photos, do studies based on the photos, put the photos away and then use those drawings for reference.
- Break up smooth tones with painterly variations. Emphasise angular planes.
- Soften the edges and subordinate the unimportant small forms.
- Draw the figure's head a little smaller than it appears in the photo.
- Use a simple backdrop behind figure photos. A refrigerator carton painted black on one side and white on the other works perfectly.
- Bracket the exposure (take under- and overexposed photos) during your shoot to ensure you have information in the extreme lights and darks.





7 PAINTING FROM A MODEL

If a model has an easy pose to hold you can do the final art directly from life. That's how I did this image from Dinotopia: The World Beneath. I put pieces of tape on the floor to mark where the model's feet should return between breaks. The whole session took only about 90 minutes and it gave an intensity to the final painting.

> **Mirror studies force you to interpret the pose, giving your art more coherence**



8 WORKING FROM PLEIN-AIR STUDIES

One of the reasons that I like to paint and sketch outdoors is that the resulting studies make ideal references for future paintings. I was attracted to this bridge leading into Toledo in Spain because of the golden colour of the stone and the way that the light came from behind to illuminate the undersides of the arches. I used the light, colour and basic composition of the study as the source for a Dinotopia painting of a ruined bridge. The main change that I made was adding in the tower covered with vines and a makeshift house.





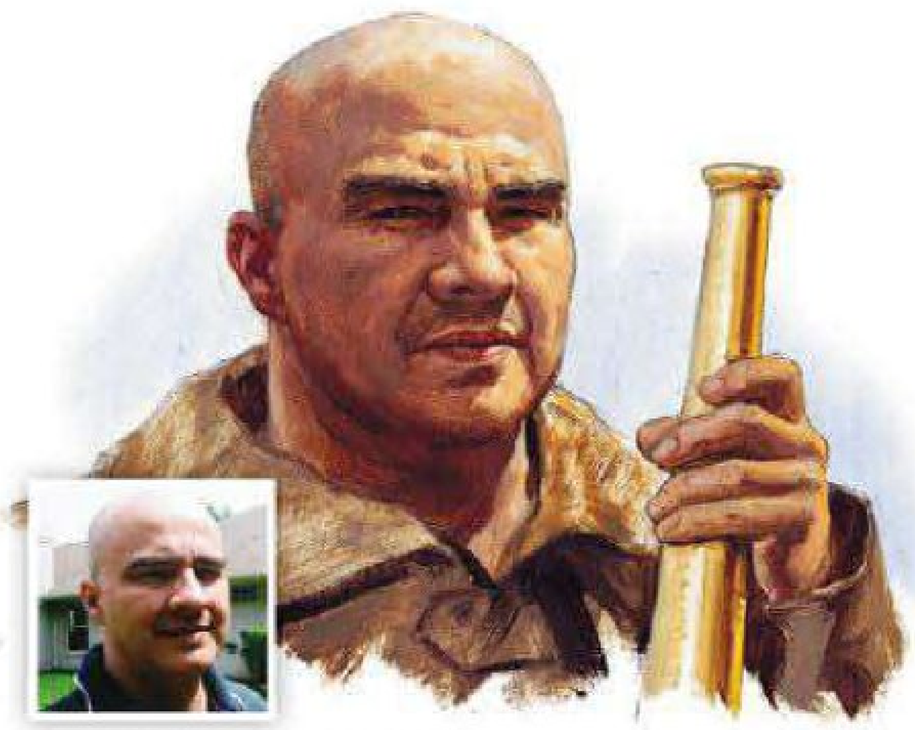
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9 ACTION POSES

I began using photos to capture kids and animals, neither of whom can't usually hold a pose for long. Photos help with action poses and for events that are difficult to observe, such as water splashes. Videos are ideal for wildlife art, because they enable you to analyse the action in slow motion. One Dinotopia painting required that I imagine a kid playing tug-of-war with a dinosaur. I recruited my cousins and had them act out the game. Photographing the action gave me a reality check for the poses I had imagined: the sketches I had done out of my head just weren't convincing, but I didn't know why until that point.





10 THE PITFALL OF PHOTO-DEPENDENCE

Photos are compelling and convincing. It's easily to get lured into copying random details, meaningless wrinkles, ordinary poses or awkward proportions. Characters based too closely on photos of friends sometimes have a snapshot quality. I call this trait "photo-dependence". In this case of this portrait of a Dinotopian firefighter, I tried to go beyond the photo by changing lots of details of the photo of my friend. I made the proportions a little more beefy and heroic, and put a bit more emphasis on his rugged brow.



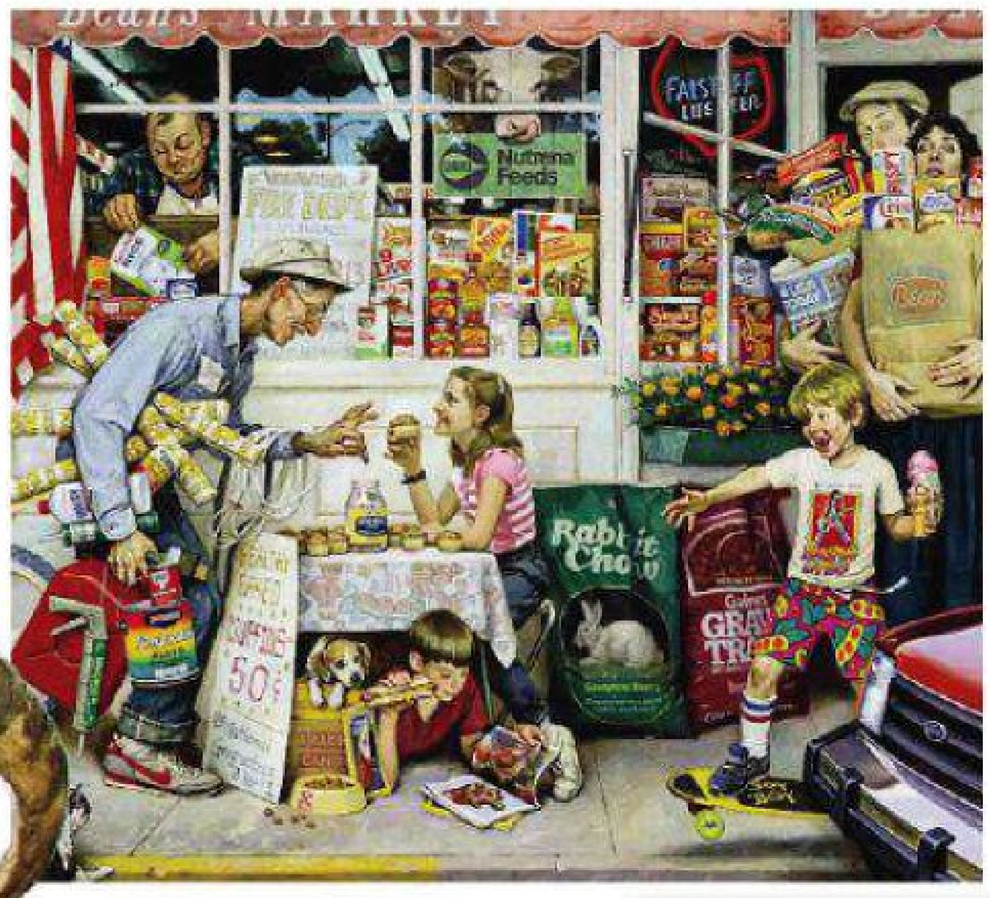


11 GOING BEYOND A LAME PHOTO

In this example I wanted to paint a picture of a man scrubbing the teeth of a dinosaur. But all I had available for a model was myself. So I grabbed some baggy pants and a long jacket and stood in the driveway with a push broom. The photo provided helpful information about cast shadows and costume details. But in many ways, the photo is unpromising. The legs appear too short. The coat hangs down in wrinkles that don't describe any action. The pose needed a better sense of gesture and a clearer silhouette. When I was about 21 years old, I met animation legend Eric Larson, one of Disney Studio's "Nine Old Men". He advised me to always go beyond the photo and to trust my memory and imagination.

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12 THE BENEFITS OF PROJECTING PHOTOS

There are two circumstances where it makes sense to project photos. One is for a celebrity likeness on a movie poster, for example, although you'll still need to tweak what the photo gives you. The other is when you have no desire to alter the information in the photo. In this scene of an imaginary storefront, I had to show an assortment of real package designs so it made sense to project up a photo than try to reproduce it freehand. For everything else I made lots of little changes from the photo reference, including making the shopkeeper about 25 years older and 25 pounds heavier.

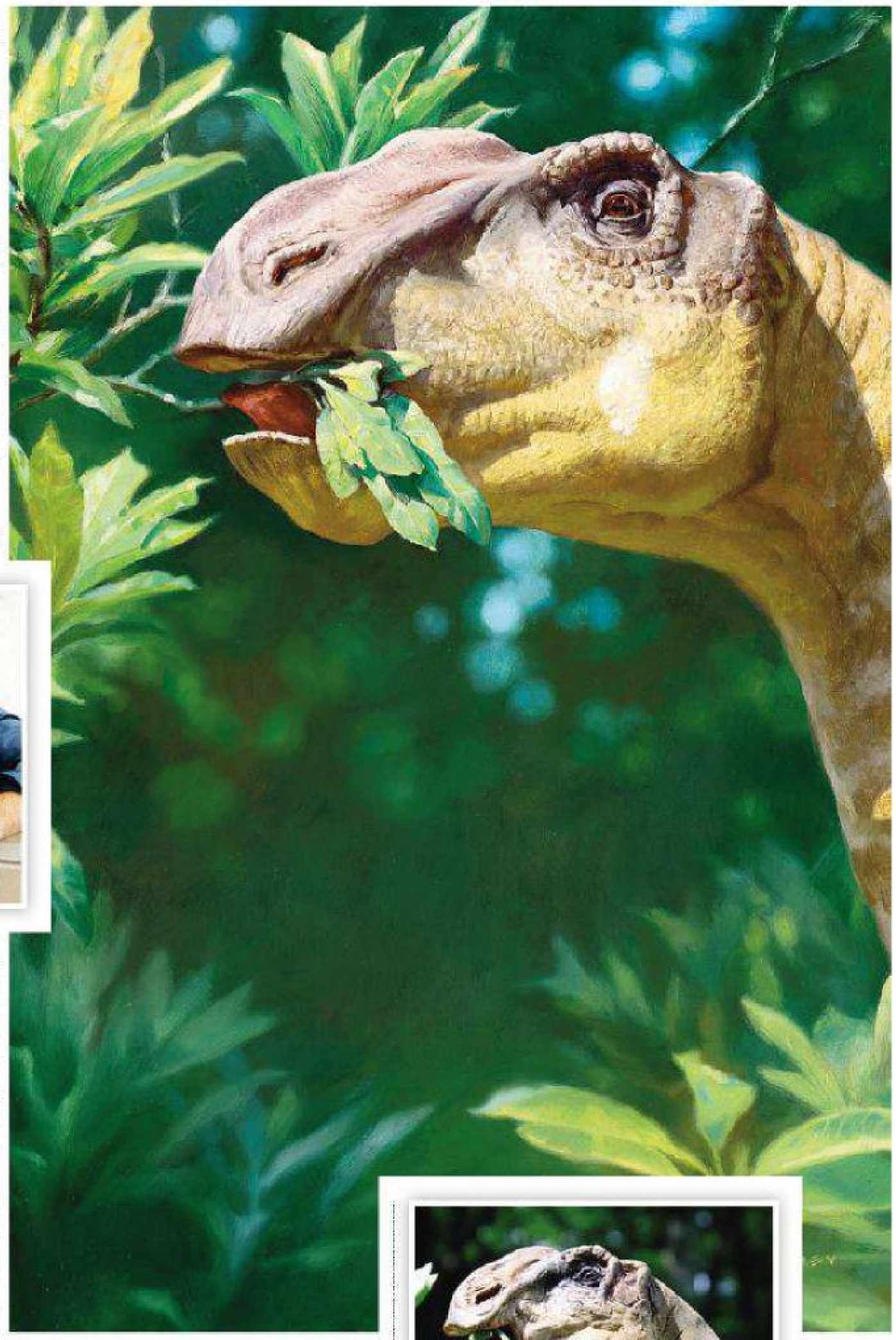


“Photos help with action poses and for events that are difficult to observe”

13 USING A TRADITIONAL SCRAP FILE

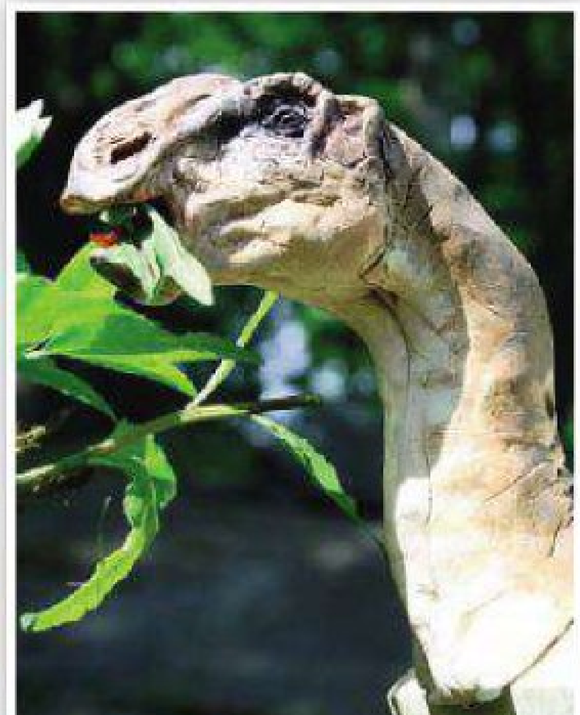
You can use existing scrap photos torn out of magazines or downloaded from the internet. They're great for sourcing animals, costume details, set dressing, textures, colour schemes and light effects. My scrap file has photos I've taken of things like stones and roots and worn surfaces that are hard to find in magazine photos. You can get existing photos from old magazines left the recycling centre or from yard sales. A few times each year, I flip through stacks of magazines and cut out the photos that strike me as interesting. Nature magazines, old National Geographics and architectural magazines are all veritable treasure troves.





14 TRY PHOTO EFFECTS

Even though I'm a traditional painter, I occasionally use photographic effects such as depth of field and motion blur. This makes sense if I'm doing a dinosaur reconstruction that I want to look like a wildlife photo. Or I might want a photographic look if I'm doing epic key frame illustrations for a movie. In this painting of a Gryposaurus dinosaur, the far forest goes out of focus. I blurred the image with white nylon flat brushes after a bristle block-in. Such focal effects are common in wildlife photographs because they're usually shot with telephoto lenses, which have a very shallow focal plane. I also used a photographic effect called “bokeh,” where faraway bright highlights or sky holes become circles that increase in size with distance.



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Photoshop

PAINT A REALISTIC FANTASY FEMALE

Discover how to create a female character that's anchored in realism rather than adrift in a sea of fantasy clichés, with **Marta Dahlig's** help

Fantasy female portraits can be tricky to pull off with any degree of success. It's such a popular subject that it's hard to give it your personal touch, never mind finding something new to say on the matter. Whenever you paint, you don't want to do something that's been done thousands of times before. It's important to find the one factor that'll make your painting stand out from the rest.

The purpose of this workshop is to show my take on the subject and the methods I used to overcome the problem of overfamilarity. I'll take you through the process of preparing the painting and discuss specific art tasks, which are composition, character, lighting modelling and texturing. This time, however, my take on texturing will be slightly different than what you're used to seeing. Because I'll be working with only a few basic brushes, there'll be no need for any fancy photo-texturing tools.

I'll also discuss the elements I want to push to the fore, those that I decide to omit, and how I achieve the most interesting technical effects. Hopefully, it'll give you some insight on how to approach your paintings and identify new ways to freshen it up.

The image was done in Photoshop, but I also have some tips on how to recreate certain textures in Painter. The painting process was recorded and you can find its video on this month's DVD. Be sure to check it out, because I mention a few extra things in the audio commentary that aren't in the text.

Artist PROFILE

Marta Dahlig
COUNTRY: Poland



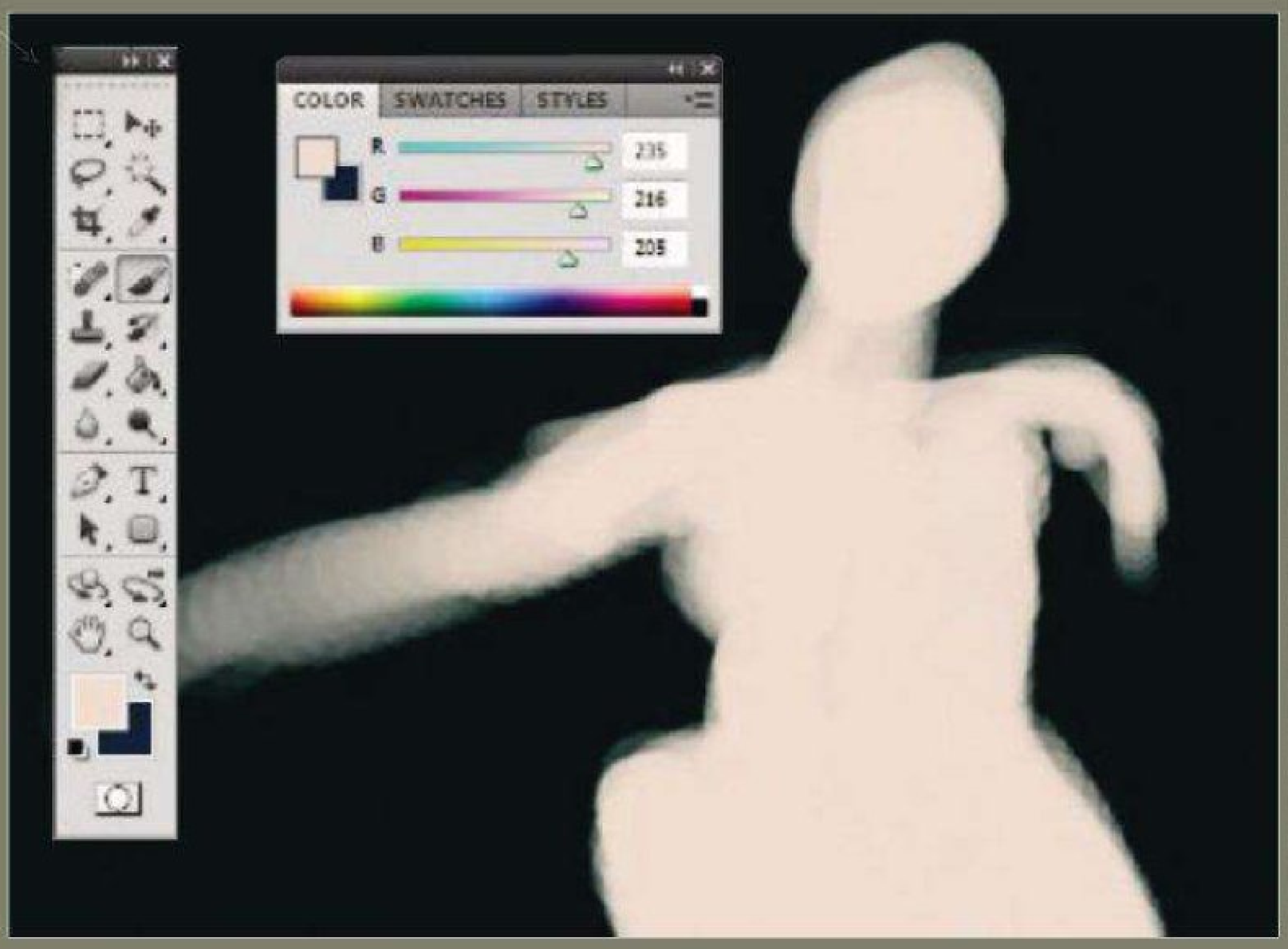
Marta's a self-taught artist who's worked for several publishing houses and mobile phone companies.
www.marta-dahlig.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Marta Dahlig folder in the Workshops folder.

1 A rough start

My general composition idea for the piece is to have a strong contrast between the plain white of the character's body and her rich surroundings. I'll use an intense, painterly lighting to help me underline this difference. I'm absolutely awful when it comes to sketching, and so I start with putting simple blobs of colour with a ragged brush, to get a feeling of the composition and where the various objects lie.





2 Filling the space

After preparing a messy layout of the pose, I add colours to the figure using the same brush on a high opacity. One thing you might have noticed is that my character is rather plump. Because the girl is going to be nude, it's important for me not to fall into the "sexy warrior" trap. If she were slim and athletic, the nudity would probably be too blatant and hackneyed. I want my character to be intense and even attractive, but not in an easy-going way.

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3 Playing with light

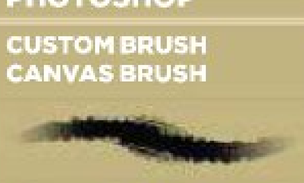
I continue adding more shadows and highlights. Working with a low opacity ragged brush helps me define and change shapes gradually. This approach is especially useful for artists who, like me, tend to be cautious about their strokes at the start of the process. I only have a few predefined colours; for the rest I sample from the transitions I naturally create using the Eyedropper. Even though the shape of the figure didn't really need a reference, I need some help when defining my shades. To achieve the correct nuances of colour, I consult references at **lockstock.deviantart.com**. One trick that I picked up some time ago by viewing this photographer's work is saturating the transition between highlighted and shadowed areas. This helps me underline the effect that light has on the flesh.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH
CANVAS BRUSH



I created this brush based on the settings of a traditional brush. It introduces a special "canvas roughness" to an object. It's not really that great for actual painting, but comes into its own when adding a traditional texture.



4 Fleshing out

For compositions like this one, it's the modelling of the character that'll determine the success of the painting. I strengthen the shades by using off-white on the areas of her body that receive the most highlights. Although I'm using the same brush, I work with gradually less opaque and larger diameters to start creating some transitions.



5 Defining shapes

Because my sketching process was a bit experimental and I worked while zoomed out of the painting, up close the figure appears blurry and messy. It's time to fix that. Still using the same brush, I reduce the diameter and define edges as well as the curves of the body. I pay extra attention to small convexities of the stomach, which naturally underlines the plumpness of my character.

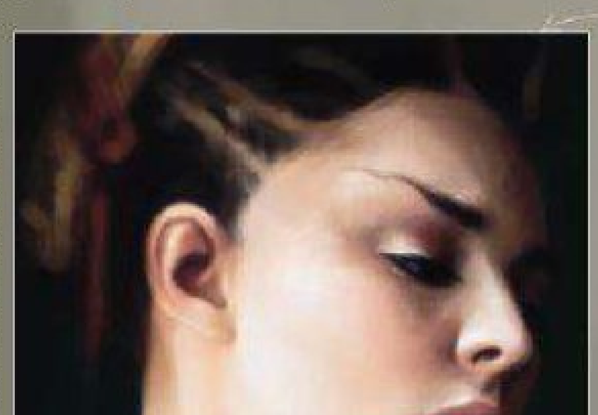


Shortcuts

Copy merged
Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)
Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)
To copy something from several layers, select the area, press these keys and paste it.

6 Select group of brushes

Because I want the painting to be realistic but still retain a painterly quality, I limit myself to a few, select brushes. The basic one is my usual ragged round. From Photoshop's default selection I use an airbrush for occasional smoothing, one bristle brush and a square brush. Finally, a traditional grainy brush will be used for adding an extra bit of texture that'll resemble a traditional canvas. All texturing effects in the painting will be created only with these brushes.



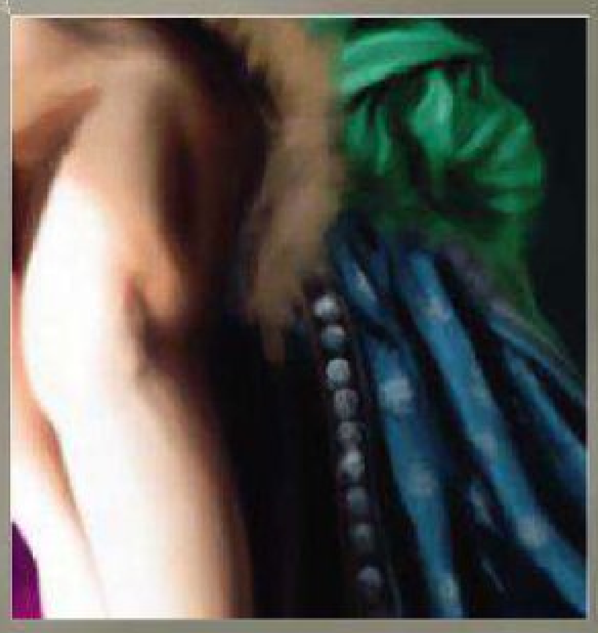
7 Visible brushstroking

Up until now I've worked in a similar manner to my usual workflow, but for this step I slightly change my approach. Because I want my image to feel painterly, I won't texture the face to look smooth and photo realistic, but instead add some very visible brushstrokes to underline its most important features. I placed a few strokes with the rough traditional brush around the eyebrows, cheek and nose.

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8 Modelling textiles

Once the face is partially completed, I move on to defining the textiles in the image. Because I'm unsure on what I want to do with the left-hand side of the painting, I start painting the folds on the right. Each type of fabric requires a different approach, so it's important to familiarise yourself with those variations so that you know how to accurately depict them on the canvas. For now I want the green to be a shiny satin, while the blue is a rough, slightly stiff raw silk. When depicting the folder materials I'm mindful that the flow of a stiffer fabric isn't as smooth – it looks edgy and even creased. For softer materials the curve of the folds is delicate and natural.



9 Preparing the necklace

I fancy a change of scene and so I move on to the necklace, which up until now only exists as a few messy strokes. First I paint flat shapes of the beads on top of the messy sketch. If you're wondering why I'm bothering to sketch on top of such a messy background, it's because this gives me some initial shade variation that I'll later blend into the skin, resulting in richer-looking colours. To do this I make my standard brush opaque and paint precise shapes.



10 Preliminary shading

Now that my shapes are in place, I push the shading slightly by adding some highlights and shadows with a ragged brush. This simulates a bit of detail and gives me an idea of how the whole thing is going to look. I use a semi-transparent ragged round brush for this step.



11 Tackling the fur

It took me a while to figure out a simple way to paint fur, and not go crazy trying to get the strands right. The secret here is to treat fur as one surface or a very plump material, rather than a set of independent strands. The first thing I do is take a lighter version of my basic colour and paint some wider strokes on top of it with a ragged round brush. This simulates groups of strands. I then add variations in colour, placing some darker blobs at the base of it to simulate the natural shades.



PRO SECRETS

Duplicate your window

When defining or detailing objects, it's important to know how your strokes affect the painting as a whole. How often have you found that an object looks great close up, but when you zoom out it's clear that it doesn't work with the rest of the painting? To avoid this situation, configure Photoshop to duplicate the view of your painting. This enables you to see your art when zoomed in and out at the same time.

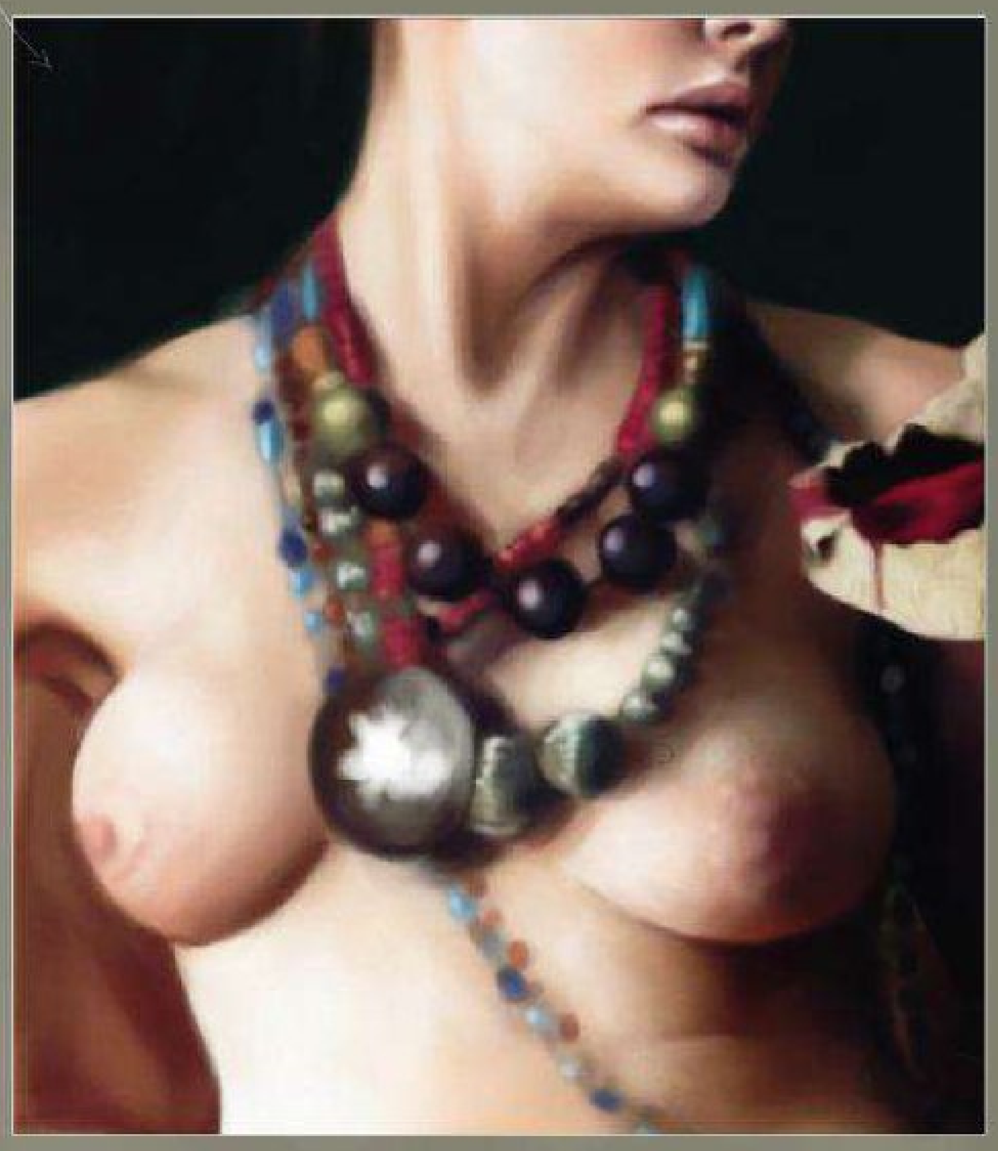
12 Finishing the fur

Once the base is prepared, I run over the area with the same brush, painting smaller strands and adding details of single hairs. If I did this without the base then the fur wouldn't have a natural "flow" and it would feel much more like just a chaotic layer of hair, rather than something soft and balanced.



13 Completing the body

I finish up the body in a similar way I did the face: I put in a couple of opaque ragged round strokes and a few blobs with the rough traditional brush to achieve a painterly feel. I add precise shapes with a low diameter brush – for example, to emphasise the slightly concave bellybutton – and add a few lighter strokes to highlight the roundness of the stomach.

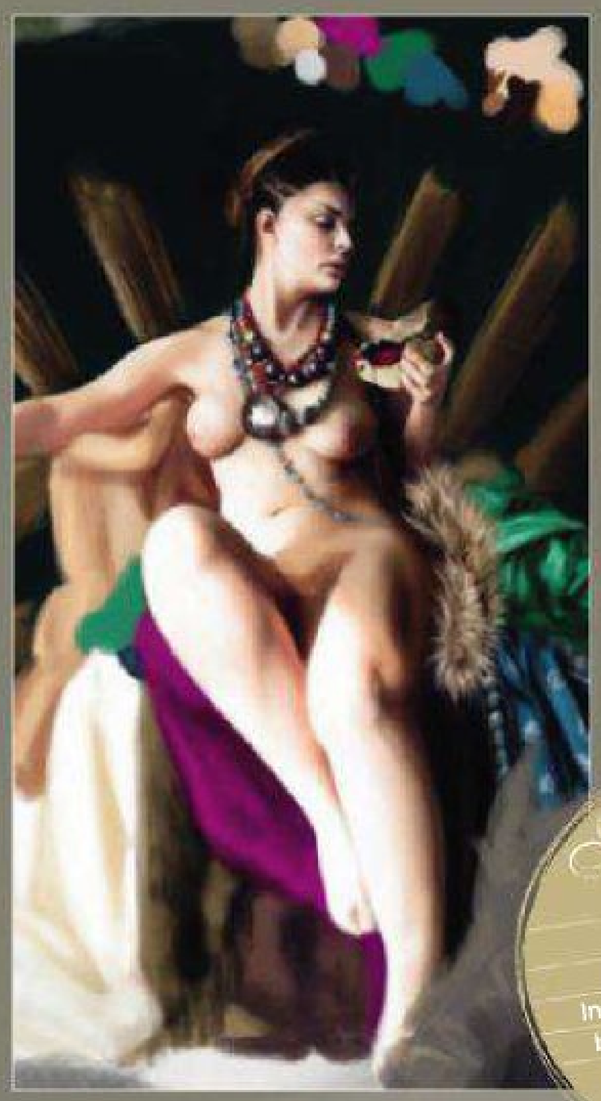


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14 General sketch

Now that I'm at the point where I have some elements nearly done, I move on to defining the rest of the piece. I don't want my character to sit on any specific object, so I sketch out a rough wooden throne. It's subtle, yet gives some character and hints at the tribal atmosphere that I'm going for. I also want to add some skulls. Oh, and because I love animals, I'm going to paint a few boars around this woman, too.



PRO SECRETS

Texturing with one brush

To create a believable texture without using a custom texturing brush, create colour variations and vary your brush strokes. For example, when painting stone, place small dots and lines of different colours of varying opacity from green through orange to standard browns and greys. Only when placed on top of each other, over and over again, will the multilayered blobs look believable.

Shortcuts

Change brush size

[and] (PC & Mac)

Increase or decrease the brush size of the active brush in Photoshop.



15 A touch of glam

One of the toughest parts of this painting is getting the necklace right. I don't want to overdo it, and yet it's supposed to be the focal point of the painting. I zoom in and define the edges further. I strengthen highlights and add slight colour variations to the beads. By adding dotted highlights and blobs of bounced colour I make them appear more detailed than they actually are. A rough brushstroke around the highlight, similar to those on the face, gives me an extra bit of roughness. In general, the trick here lies in the amount of mixed necklaces, not their individual shading. It's the variety of the beads that makes the whole area look intricate. If you look at them separately, you'll notice they aren't shaded with any degree of detail.

16 Texturing textiles

When it comes to depicting different kinds of textiles, you should consider highlight dispersion as well as noting how they're folded. Rougher materials tend to have their highlights much more diluted than smooth fabrics. As such, highlights on smooth pink silk will be condensed to narrow strokes of colour, those on satin will have visible points of concentration, and the lights on raw blue silk will be extremely diffused and hard to pinpoint.



17 Finishing up

I finish up the remaining areas of the painting in a similar manner to the techniques mentioned in the previous steps. After going online for anatomy references, I texture my boars in the same manner as I painted the fur. As you can see when zoomed in, the wooden and stone textures are very sketchy. I've done this deliberately, ensuring that the character is the centre of attention.



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ArtRage

SELECTIONS AND TRANSFORMATIONS

ImagineFX CORE SKILLS

Discover intuitive ways of defining and manipulating selections in ArtRage, with the help of the knowledgeable **Simon Dominic**

At first glance, ArtRage's image manipulation offerings appear to be rather basic, comprising little more than a Selection tool and a Transform tool. However, behind those icons lurk some impressive features: Varied Selection Modes make possible complex shape definition, while Type-specific settings, such as Feather, enable subtle bleeds and special effects. Most tools have their own specific settings and mixing and matching Types with Modes makes for a wide range of results. Best of all, the selection and transformation processes are very intuitive. Not only do you always knows what's going on, you'll also be tempted to explore by experimentation rather than retreating to the ArtRage manual in frustration.

1 Basic transformation

You can select the entire contents of a layer directly. On a multi-layer image choose the Transform tool from the Tool Picker. In the Settings panel, tick Select Layer. Now when you click your cursor over painted areas of your image it'll automatically select the correct layer and enable you to move or transform its contents. If you untick Select Layer then only the content of the current layer will be transformed.

2 Advanced Selection

Choose the Selection tool from the Tool Picker. From Settings, click Type: Ellipse, Mode: Add. Set Feather: 15%. Create several selections and then choose Oil Brush. Paint over your selections and see how the feathering enables the paint to bleed into the rest of your image. Press Ctrl/Cmd+D to clear the selections. Note: after creating any selection you can choose Mode: Replace and drag the selection to reposition it.

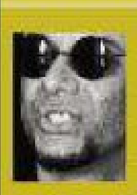
3 Magic Wand

ArtRage can also select areas based on colour. First, paint a colourful image. Go to Settings and choose Type: Magic Wand and Mode: Add. Set Feather to 10 per cent and Spread to 25 per cent. Click a couple of different colours. Notice how only similar colours are selected. Now copy and paste your selection. You can use the Edit>Invert Selection command to lasso everything but your selection at any time.



Artist PROFILE

Simon Dominic
COUNTRY: England



Simon is a freelance illustrator, specialising in fantasy, sci-fi and horror. He's worked on game card art, covers and more.
www.painterly.co.uk

THE SELECTION SETTINGS PANEL

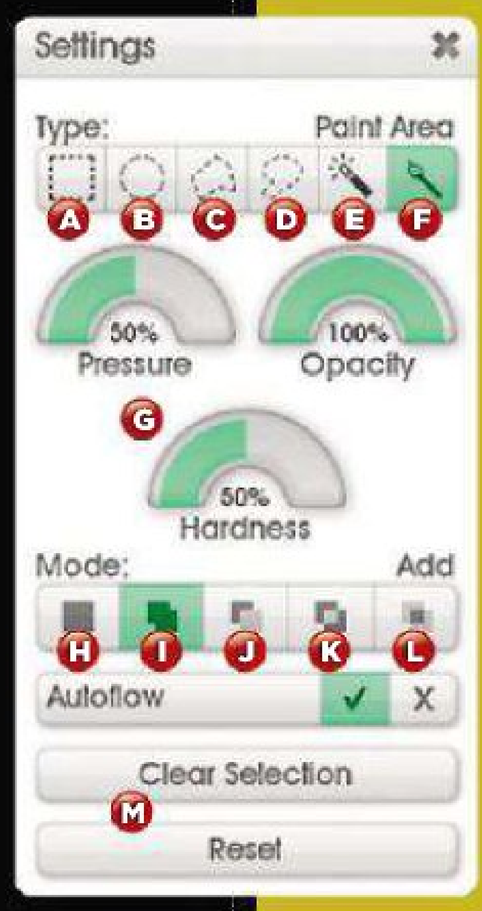
A. Rectangle
Basic rectangular selection tool. Hold Shift after clicking to get a square.

B. Ellipse
Generate an elliptical selection, or circular if used with Shift.

C. Polygon
Click to join the dots, then double-click to close the shape.

D. Freehand
Draw a freehand shape. It'll automatically close when you lift your pen.

E. Magic Wand
Selects nearby areas based on colour. The higher the Spread value the less strict it is.



F. Paint Area
Enables you to paint a mask to be excluded from your selection. To include only the mask, use Edit>Invert Selection.

G. Controls
Type-dependant controls, such as Opacity for Paint Area and Spread for Magic Wand.

H. Replace
When you draw a selection all other selections vanish.

I. Add
You can draw multiple selections.

J. Subtract
Subsequent selections will remove areas from your first selection when overlapped.

K. Difference
Only the selection areas that don't overlap are preserved.

L. Intersection
Only the selection areas that do overlap are preserved.

M. Toggles
Find type-specific toggles here, plus Clear and Reset tools.

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Painter & Photoshop

LOOSEN UP YOUR PAINTING STYLE

VIDEO WORKSHOP ON THE DVD

Gain the confidence to experiment with using brushes and textures. **Loïc Zimmermann** explains how to work in a looser style

Artist PROFILE

Loïc Zimmermann
COUNTRY: US



French-born Loïc is a 2D and 3D concept artist and illustrator who lives and works in Los Angeles.
www.e338.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Loïc Zimmermann folder in Workshops.
SOFTWARE: Painter 11 (trial version).

When ImagineFX asked me to do a workshop on painting loosely, I had a bit of a coughing fit. Painting loose? I wish I could do that! For some reason, it always gets a little more complicated than what I had initially planned. It's so easy to lose the loose bit. You have to ask yourself, "Why?" As in, "Why would I paint loose? Do I even want to paint loose?" It's possible at least half of you are about to turn the page. Look, even if you hadn't considered the concept before, keep reading. We're all friends here.

I didn't really know what to do with the whole loose thing, although it makes sense when you consider what I'm trying to achieve in my work. No matter what style or imagery I go for, I always think about the textures, the brush strokes. I want things to look a little on the fly, even if they're not. I find it soothing for the audience, as well as for the image itself. Bear with me on this one.

This workshop is more about demonstrating ideas and tools rather than revealing a tried-and-tested method that takes you from A to Z in your painting. Try to see it as little art experiments that I react to as I go along, some or all of which you'll be able to incorporate in your own art.

I work by iterations, but not just for refinement. I need to reach a certain level of detail before adding chaos and textures. From there I see new things and fresh areas of interest that I further define, before adding more texture and grit, and so on. You see where I'm going with this? It's a loop. I used to work a lot like that with my 3D art a few years ago, and this is a similar approach.





1 Modest beginnings

For once, I decide to start with a bad drawing. Not that I can make good ones… Anyway, I've done this to spare you the hassle of trying to follow too many broad changes during the creation process – something I tend to do in my art.

2 Start blocking

After the drawing stage, I block things out with shades of grey, using simple Photoshop brushes. It takes me just under an hour, and considering that I'm always watching something on TV with one eye (you wanted loose, right?) it's not that bad. I need to go through this stage to know what I'm aiming for before I go nuts with brushstrokes and textures.

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3 Adding textures

I try to stick to a just a few key values. The initial drawing is completely gone and the character now looks more interesting. When I'm done with the global blocking, I overlay a texture from my image bank. It adds life to the image, and introduces a range of subtle hue variations to pick up colours from. I shoot close-ups of my traditional stuff to feed my image bank. Some images become my classics for default texturing, while others are used for very specific requirements.



Shortcuts

Copy everything visible

Ctrl+Shift+C (PC)

Cmd+Shift+C (Mac)

Ideal when applying a Photoshop filter to your image.



4 Choosing brushes

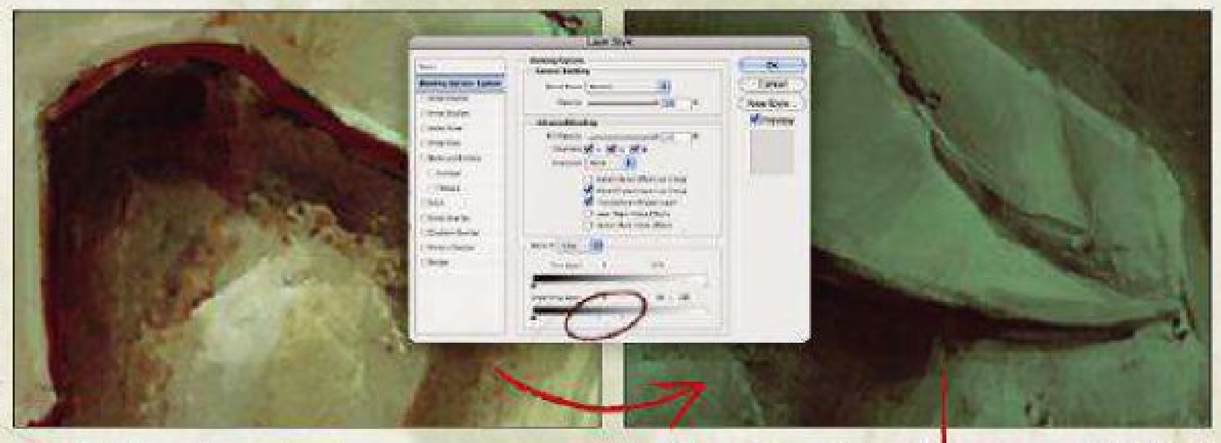
I make the first jump into Painter and start breaking the edges of the image. I do this using two blenders. One is the classic grainy Water, the other one is a custom Water Rake. Then I paint using an oil variable flat brush and the funky Sargent one. Usually, I use and abuse the Thick Impasto, but for this workshop I decide to be strong and stay away from it. Painter enables you to define a background texture that'll have an influence on some of the tools you can use. I often select the Linen Canvas for this very purpose.

5 Introduce colours

Back in Photoshop, I start throwing colours onto the image, ramping up the fun factor. To do so, I use many tricks and methods. I apply random photos – a landscape, an upside-down portrait, scanned textures… whatever I can lay my hands on. I then add a bunch of adjustment layers to crank everything up. It's only a starting point, but it's one I really enjoy because you can always surprise yourself with unexpected results – little accidents that create variations you wouldn't have thought of. In this case, it hasn't had such a strong effect to be honest, but I believe the method makes sense.

6 Unify the values

I keep pushing those values for a while, using a succession of adjustment layers and eventually textures. Then I take the result into Painter. Using the same Blending brushes, I unify the values and mix colours. I also start to paint more defined elements and features. Note that I'm forcing myself not to zoom in. This ensures that every brushstroke remains a little loose. It also keeps me away from the crazy detailing trap.



7 Staying in tune

I almost always 'tune' my layers, by which I mean the blending options. I play with adjustment layers or textures according to the image I'm working on. It doesn't feel too filtered, especially when you combine this with a bit of masking. You can apply an overall texture, set it to Soft light, then play with those blending options to only keep the texture in a specific brightness range, for example.



8 A natural feel

I'm tweaking a few things at this point. Don't ask me why; I have no idea. I use the Liquify tool for this. It's fast and helps me test things from a design point of view, and then work manually to ensure there's a natural feel to the image. Otherwise, strokes would look obviously stretched. Here's an example of how I can redesign something by warping it using the Liquify tool, followed by a paint-over in Photoshop, then Painter.



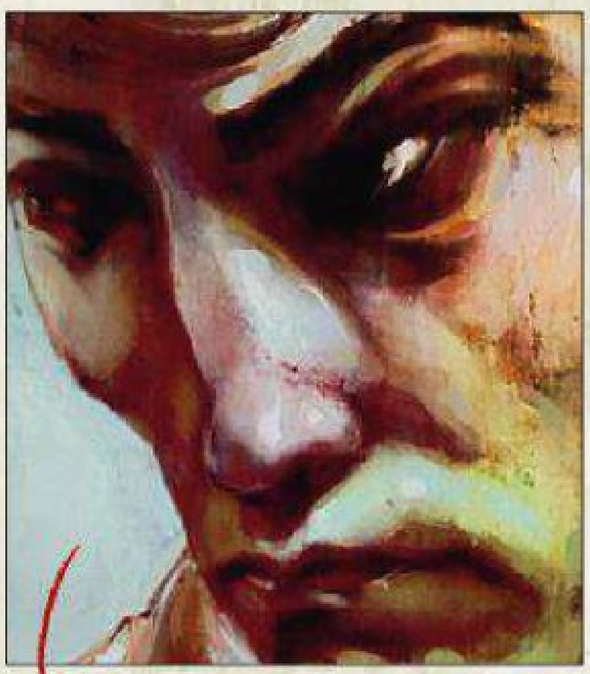
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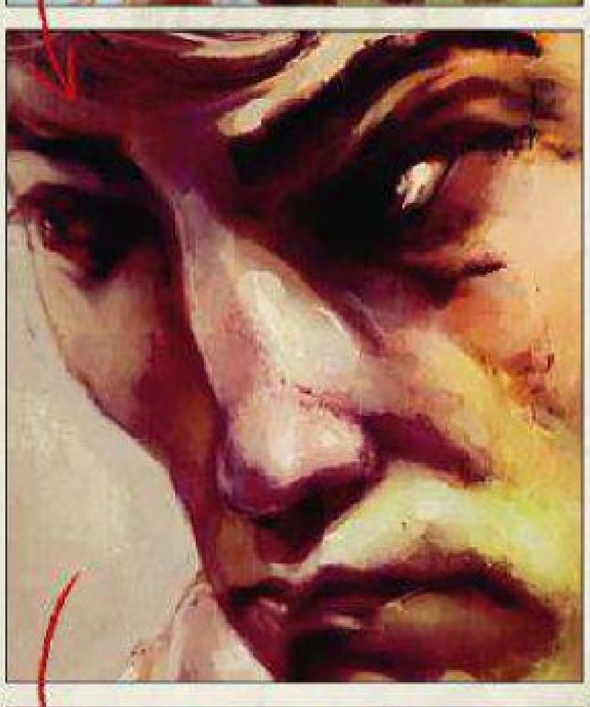
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9 Adding details

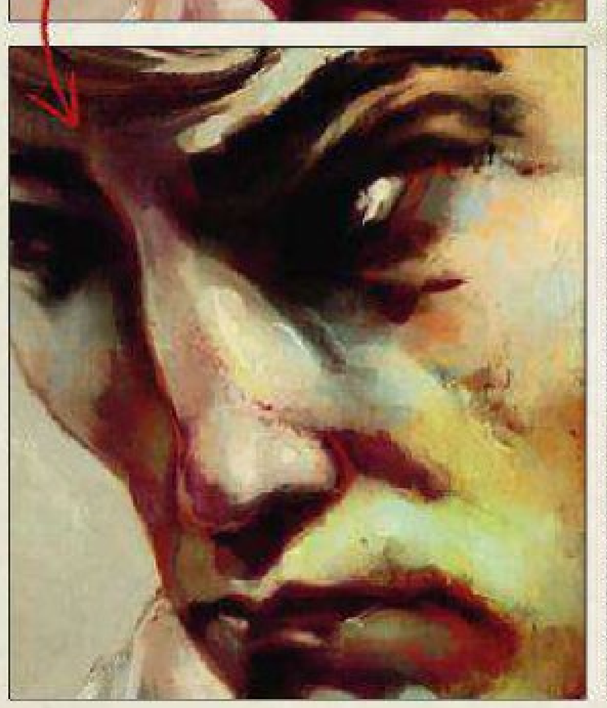
I start to paint thinner details, little lines and masses, a rim light and stuff like that – but still no zooming into the image! I then move across the image when I paint, trying to push forward all my areas of interest at the same time. I also tend to put touches of most of the key colours in many locations, to unify the piece.





10 Hair today...

I've decided to lose the funny and very graphical aspect of the hair in the end. I'm not pleased about getting rid of it, but it's a design thing. That's another important thing to remember: sometimes you have to make tough decisions to really get the image to work. No matter how much you like one particular aspect of an image you're working on, if it has to go, it has to go. In the case of the hair, it could actually work, but I want to crop the image and then it'll look a bit disturbing. It's given me ideas for another image, though, which is good.



11 Colour choices

I apply overall changes in the hues to test what works and what doesn't. I tend to go quite extreme, look at the details, see how they turn out, and then make decisions about what route to go. The upper part of the face becomes colder, except for the nose. I like to play with those cold and warm values next to each other. Funny fact: what appears to be blue-green on the thumbnail is more of a washed out yellow-ish grey than anything else.

12 Back and forth

I'm almost there. I make a few more adjustments, switching between Photoshop and Painter, one feeding the other. In Painter I keep breaking things up, creating little variations over the surface, using the strokes to give a bit of dynamism. When I bring this back into Photoshop, I usually set the layer around 80 per cent opacity. That way, I preserve a slight percentage of the previous stage of the image, making it richer each time. I don't mind overdoing things in Painter because I can always mask out what doesn't work. I kept flipping the image and couldn't decide which version to choose. Then, at last, I went for this one.

PRO SECRETS

Keeping it simple

I've noticed that to keep things a little simple, the more I constrain myself not to zoom in the image too much, the better the end result. The same goes with the tools I'm using. Try to block up as much as you can with a broad brush, and then slowly refine the image.

13 In summary

Most of the time, I only have a vague feeling of what the final image should be – an idea that I work towards. It's important not to overdo your art. You want to keep the audience busy, making their eyes travel on the image and letting their brain connect the dots and fill the spaces you've left empty. Loose is also in the way you render things, and in this case I was more looking to introduce a traditional look into my image – something more illustrative and painterly. I leave lots of room for improvisation, but I'm pretty harsh on myself and on the decisions I make. At least I try to be, but then you don't want to cripple your own work, either. Yeah. Painting loose. Must be a state of mind...

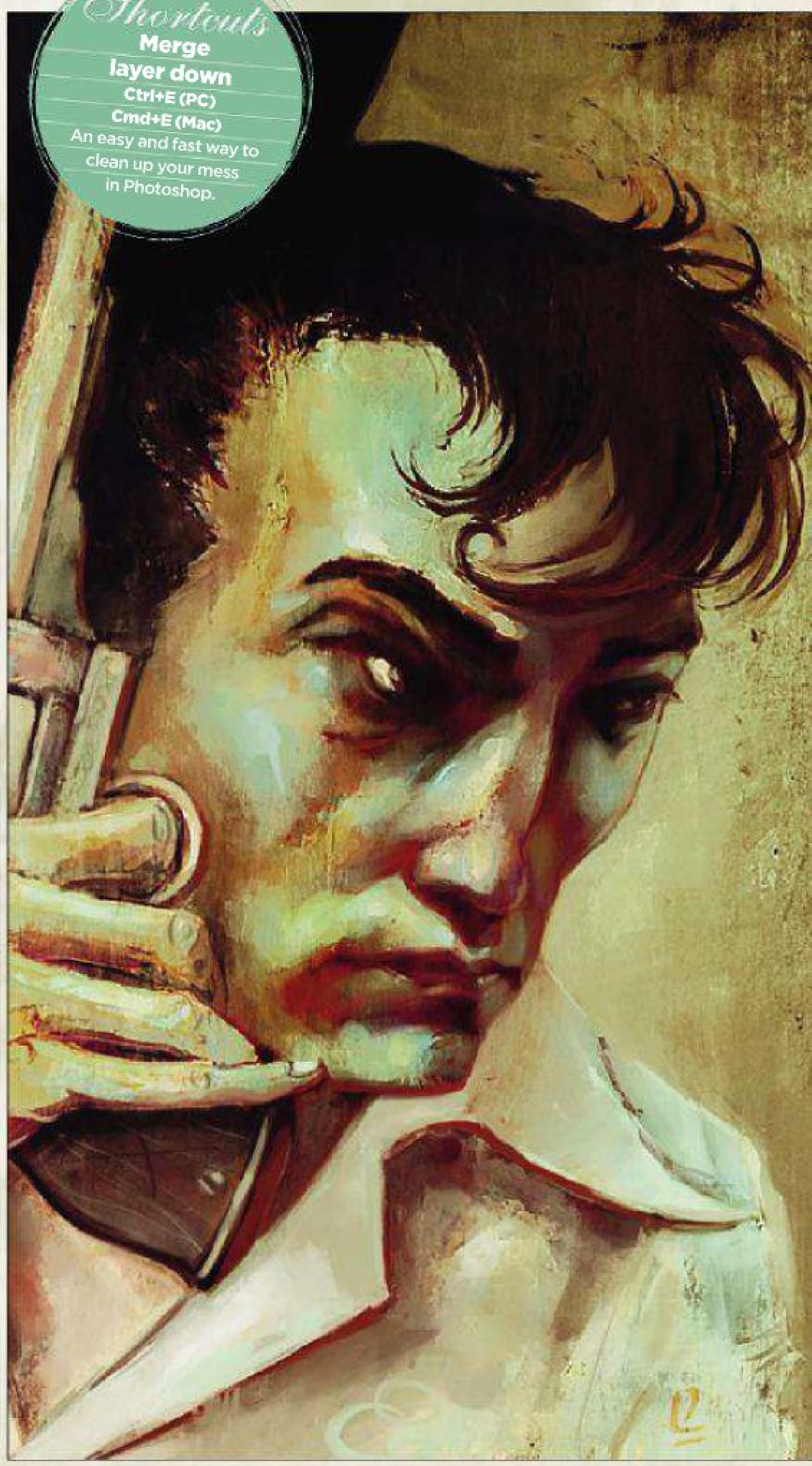
Shortcuts

Merge layer down

Ctrl+E (PC)

Cmd+E (Mac)

An easy and fast way to clean up your mess in Photoshop.



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Next month in...

FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX

Manga Special

Udon artist Gonzalo 'Genzoman' Ordoñez lifts the lid on manga character design!

PLUS! Discover the secrets to pencilling, inking and colouring manga, with Omar Dogan!

Q&A manga beginner's special
Comic artists Emma Vieceli, Chester Ocampo, Chris Ng, Reza Ilyasa and more share their tips!

Keeping up with the Joneses
Pin-up artist Erik Jones shows how to get the best from Photoshop's range of filters.

Jane Radstrom's fabric masterclass
The celebrated artist advises how to paint different types of fabric reacting to a person's form.

The rise of Joe Madureira
The man behind Uncanny X-Men talks about leaving manga-inspired comics for the world of video games.

ISSUE 71 ON SALE *31 MAY 2011*

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Photoshop

GENERATE QUICK ENVIRONMENT ART

Annis Naeem shows how using small marker pen thumbnails to create a larger-than-life fantasy scene can tick all the right concept art boxes

VIDEO WORKSHOP ON THE DVD

Artist PROFILE

Annis Naeem
COUNTRY: US



Annis is an LA-based designer. He attends the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California and his passions include drawing, painting, vehicles and burritos. Annis collaborated on the book Drive and his second book is due out later this year.
www.annisnaeem.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Annis Naeem folder in Workshops.

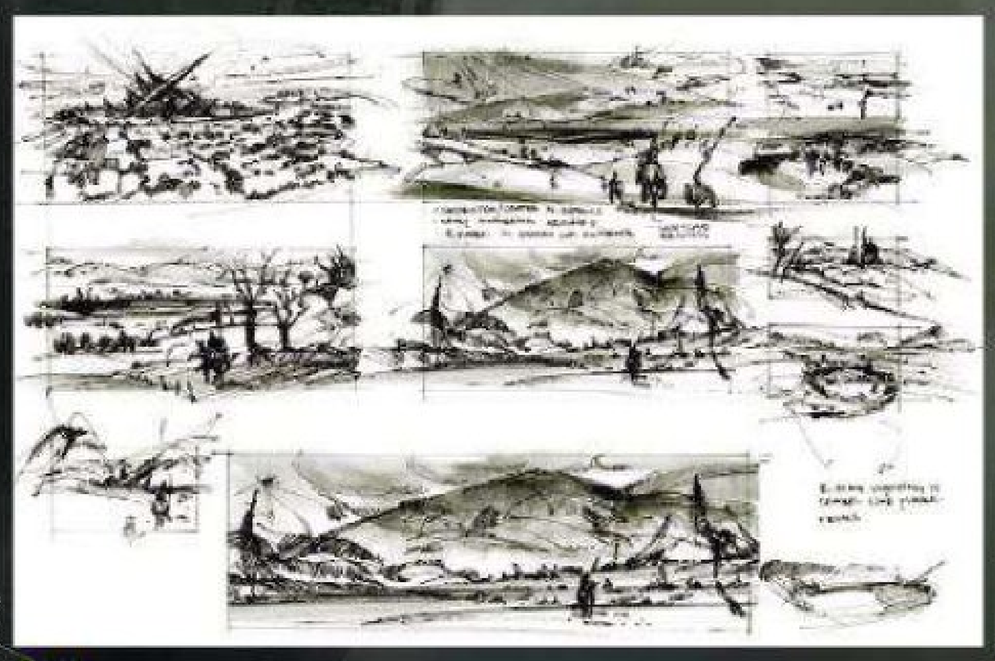
Rarely do you get the chance to take your time on an image and noodle for days on end. The romanticism we artists grew up with of painting every millimetre of our paintings photo-realistically all of the time is hardly ever a commercial requirement. Many clients either want the painting the next day or, if you're really lucky, the day after that.

In the field of concept design, the client won't care that you used pictures of rocks dispersed throughout the image or that you placed a photo of grass on an Overlay layer. To them, the image must serve its purpose by communicating an idea while not violating any copyright laws (so take your own photos!).

As such, I begin assignments by writing down the core elements needed for the painting, followed by research. To satiate the artist within and also to keep the client happy and in control, I begin with a Pigma Sensei 0.3 pen and Tombow markers to create thumbnails that I then scan in and paint in Photoshop. This painting began in the same vein, with the idea that I wanted a rocky landscape in a crater-like form and have a medieval knight riding through the scene. It needed to be epic in scale and that was pretty much all I needed to get started.

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1 Draw thumbnails

I create a collection of thumbnails and write down my thoughts as I go along. These notes are as much for me to remember as for my client to see. While some thumbnails may not be as effective, I find it useful to take my favourite parts from thumbnails and try to bring them together in a new thumbnail. Doing this gives you double the amount of work to choose from in half the time.

PRO SECRETS

Consider using 3D software

While 3D wasn't used in this painting because most of the scene was organic, 3D packages are a great way to block out environments in perspective, even if it's a simple box, sphere or cone. The details can then be added to the image correctly without you having to worrying about perspective.



2 Picking a favourite

I settle on this thumbnail because it leads nicely into the image. Its proportions are in balance and the image is angled slightly for a little dynamism. I keep things very rough at this stage, because everything except the general proportions will change. Noodling now is a waste of time unless you plan on using the linework as a part of your final illustration. So work fast, but effectively.



3 Painting underneath

I create a new document that will be close to the final size of the finished image. Then I paste my thumbnail in and move it around, filling the page as I see fit. I set this layer to Multiply and create a new layer underneath. From here, to achieve a quick base colour and value range, I use one of my previous paintings as an underlay for colour reference.

Shortcuts

Place items on a layer

Ctrl+Shift+J (PC)

Apple+Shift+J (Mac)

Select an area with the Lasso tool then press this key combo.



4 The Lasso tool

Once I have a decent value range established and a composition that's blocked out, I begin painting on top of the sketch rather than below. Using the Lasso tool I draw my shapes and silhouettes. I feel that if something has a strong silhouette, very little else is needed to convey that message. Conversely, hyper-detailing won't fix a bad silhouette, and things will end up looking messy.



5 Using photos

To quickly produce a better value structure, I'll sometimes take one of my own photos and throw it on top of the painting. I do this here and play with Photoshop's layer blending modes (Normal, Overlay, and Soft Light usually work best) and opacity settings to see what suits the image best. At times, happy accidents will occur, creating new and interesting shapes that I can then flesh out.



6 Changes on the go

In most cases I'll edit the initial thumbnail heavily as I progress, seeing what feels right. Here, I decide that a monolithic rock structure is needed to help establish a grander scale and a solid foreground. This is done very quickly and zoomed out, so I can easily judge the proportion and design of the silhouette. I use Shift-click with the Brush tool to produce straight lines across large areas.



7 Gradients and haze

The image is becoming too cluttered with values and the background is beginning to conflict with the foreground value structure. So I create a new layer, choose a neutral sky colour and use the Gradient tool to flow the colour down past the middle of the painting. I then erase parts of the foreground that don't need this treatment to help them stand out.



8 Adjustment layers

I always create a black and white Adjustment layer on top of my layers that I turn on and off throughout the painting. This helps me to see and judge my values better, and catch those mistakes early before they become a big annoyance. To create an Adjustment layer, go to Image>Adjustments>Black & White. Similarly, you can create a Color Balance layer to control and change colour values, and paint on top of your work.



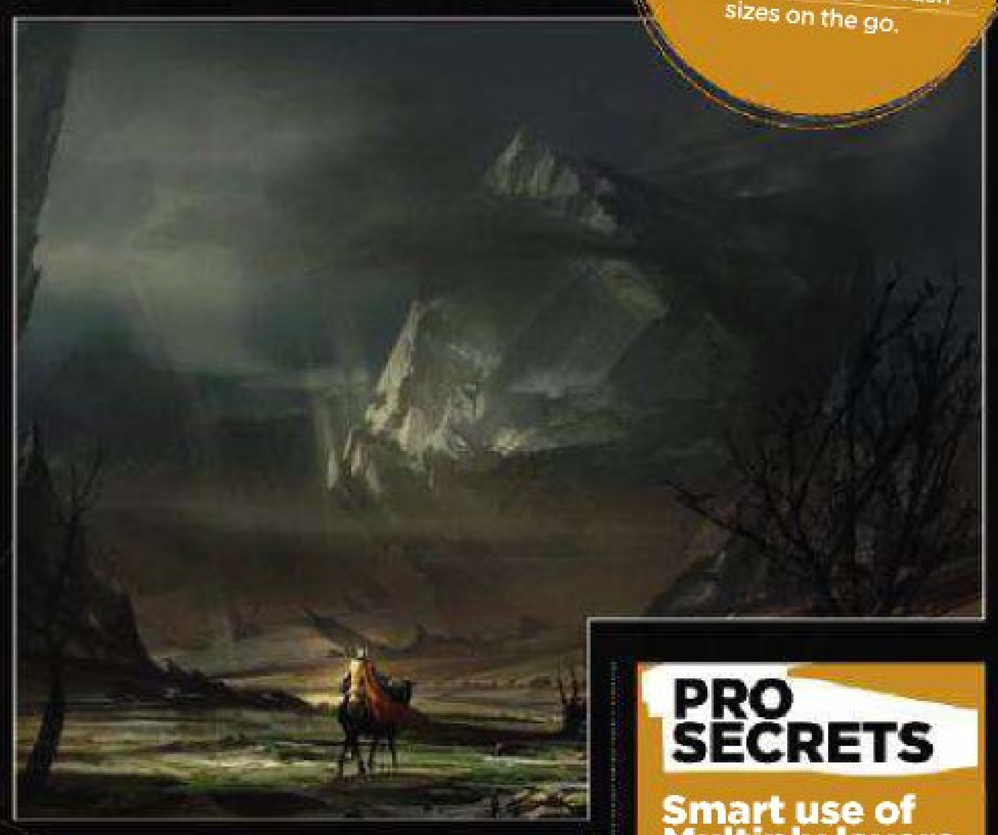
9 Double the fun

I work with two monitors. I have the preview window of the painting zoomed out on a separate screen so I can judge composition and scale. This way I can add detail while zoomed in and look up to my other screen to see how this affects the overall image. I'll also zoom out and paint very large objects in the scene on a new layer, before scaling them down to their proper size. This works best with figures.



10 The heart of the piece

I feel that a clear purpose to the painting is still missing – it needs a central piece to hold it together. I browse through my photos and choose a rock that I place in the distance. I adjust the photo's levels and this immediately creates the epic scale I was looking for. I now start detailing the scene. I constantly flip my painting back and forth horizontally to check any flaws in symmetry, composition and proportion.



11 Pools of light

After getting my values down, I decide that haze is needed to push the rock back even more for a greater effect. I then add clouds around the structure to emphasise its scale. And as a final touch, I create a new layer, set it to Color Dodge and use a warm colour to paint in areas of highlights to add that extra edge of attention I feel is required for the focal points of the painting.

ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: HARD ROUND 30 1



This brush is textured and good for filling in big areas. I find it's best used with the Lasso tool.

CUSTOM BRUSH: CHALK 44 PIXELS 3

By painting in a low brush size, this is good for drawing and creating noise in small areas. I usually use it late on for painting in detail.

Shortcuts

Change brushes

Ctrl+Alt (PC)

Ctrl+Apple (Mac)

In Photoshop CS5, drag the mouse to change brush sizes on the go.

PRO SECRETS

Smart use of Multiply layers

Instead of painting shadows, it helps to create a Multiply layer and use a complementary colour, so no detail is lost underneath. Summarily, using the Lighten and Darken layer modes helps control highlights and dark spots in the painting respectively, without having to paint out those values.

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Painter & Photoshop

CONVEY THE FEEL OF NATURAL MEDIA

VIDEO WORKSHOP ON THE DVD

Do you strive to give your fantasy art an illustrative look? Then look no further, as **Nicole Cardiff** uses her traditional skills to paint a cloaked hero

In this workshop I'll describe the painting process that I use for all of my professional projects. I scan in a pencil drawing and import it into Photoshop. I then use a mix of Painter and Photoshop – Photoshop for most of the initial block-in and early work, plus some final tweaks, and Painter for most of the later blending and detailing work. I also shoot photographic references of fabric and the main character's pose.

The process is similar to what I'd do if I were painting traditionally. It starts with a sketch, then I lay in a sepia tone to use as a ground (the base colour you tone the canvas with) and then block in my colours. I use Painter IX and Photoshop CS 4, but you could get similar results with most versions of both programs. I recommend using a Wacom tablet for digital painting like this. I have a Graphire from many versions ago, but you can use whatever tablet you have at home.

Artist PROFILE

Nicole Cardiff

COUNTRY: US



Nicole received her BFA in Illustration from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2005 and has been freelancing since then, working on game ads and marketing.

www.artofnicolecardiff.com

DVD Assets

The files you need are on your DVD in the Nicole Cardiff folder in the Workshops folder.

SOFTWARE: Painter 11 (trial version).

1 Sketch

I sketch a set of thumbnails, clean them up a bit in Painter with the Thick and Thin Pen tool and then choose one. I do a sketch with an HB pencil and paper and scan it in at 300dpi. After a bit of Levels tweaking to get the white of the paper looking really white and setting the sketch as a Multiply layer in Photoshop, I'm ready to start painting.





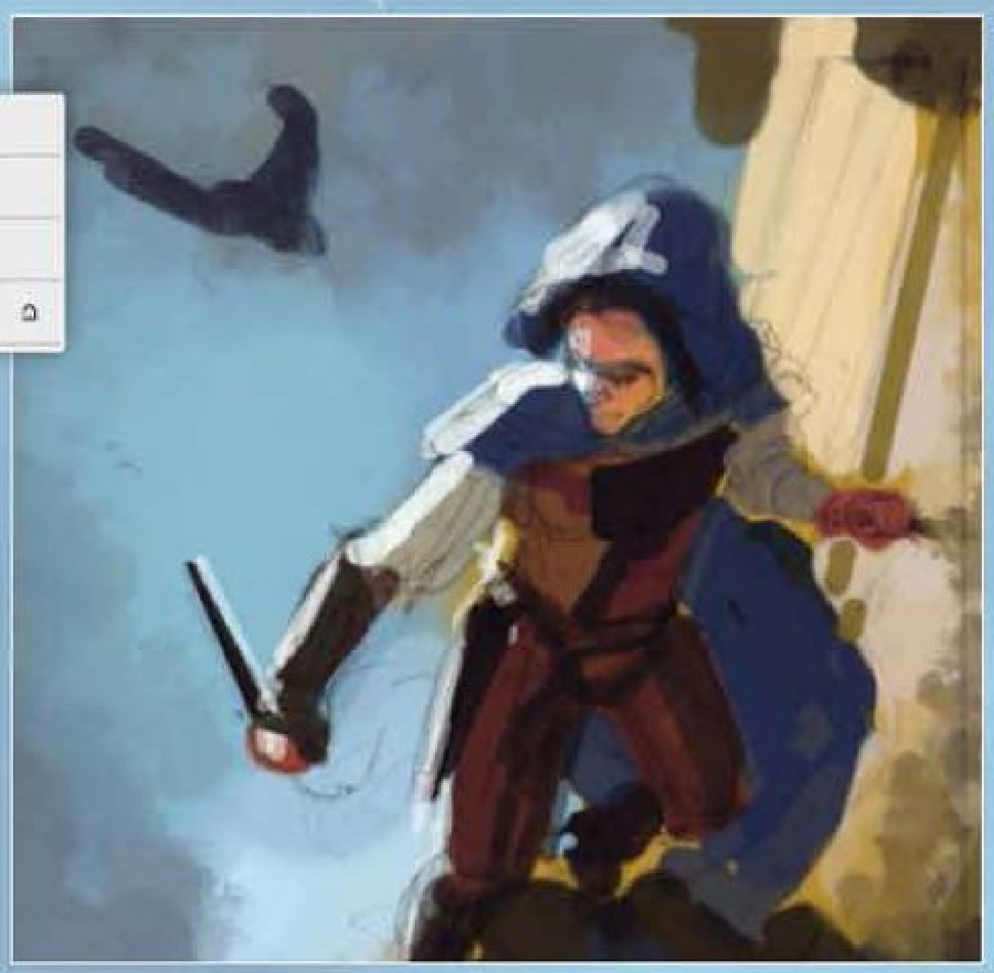
2 Initial painting

I set a brown, sepia tone on a layer beneath my sketch. I find that working on a warm ground with a middle value yields useful results for me. Cool colours look good over it, and it's much easier to maintain good contrasts if you start with something to break up the white. All of my initial block-in is done with a hard round brush in Photoshop. I generally do a few quick colour studies for various times of day and lighting situations to find the best solution.

I also refer to anatomical landmarks, by which I mean the points where you can typically see the skeletal structure under the skin – cheekbones, collarbones and so on. I also generally recommend that people be somewhat familiar with hard and soft edges as a general concept; typically, I'll have the hardest edges on the forms that are in light, and the softest on forms that are in shadow. This replicates the way that the eye perceives form.

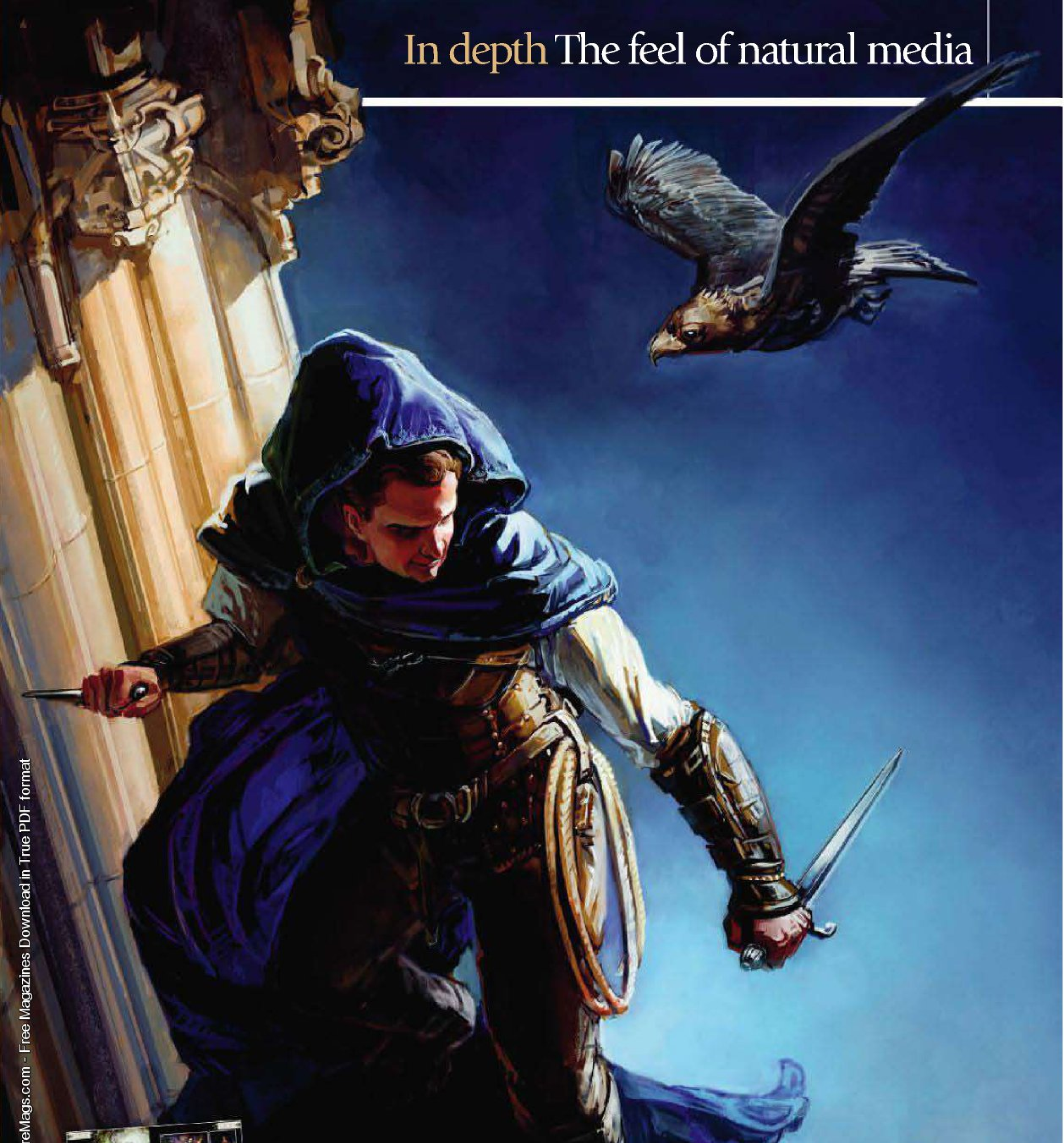
3 Start form rendering

I'm careful while doing this initial block-in to keep a clear value distinction between areas of light and areas of shadow. This will keep the painting from becoming muddy later on as I add detail. I also photograph some references to keep my lighting reasonably accurate to how it wraps around forms. I strongly recommend getting a photo light for doing this, because it's been one of my best artistic investments.



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RISING STAR

Nicole was one of ImagineFX's Rising Stars of 2010. Our search for this year's hottest young artists starts on page 34...

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4 Switch to Painter

I'm fond of blocking in at this level with Painter's Marker brush, so I zoom in and start working on the anatomy here. It's important to spend time getting the focal point of the composition right, so I work for a while on getting the anatomy of the figure the way I want it. I also generally lean towards exaggerating the light a bit and using a sketchy touch to mark anatomical landmarks, so that the bone structure is in place.

Shortcuts

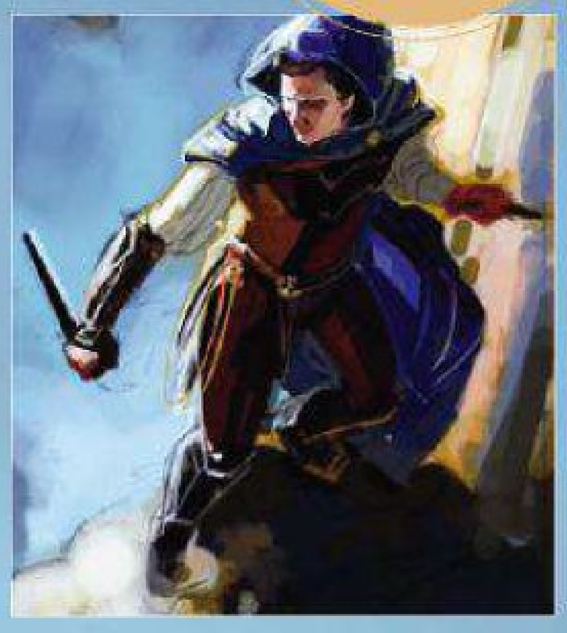
Change brush size quickly

[and] (PC & Mac)

A quick way of getting a larger or smaller version of the Photoshop brush in use.

5 Emphasise the shadows

I simplify my values a little bit by moving the midpoint of the Levels in an Adjustment layer to .94. I find that doing this early on tends to keep my shadow areas distinct from the areas in the light. I also add a new layer set to Overlay with a flat medium-blue fill, which introduces a bit more of a mood to the lighting.





6 Finalise the composition

This is where I make decisions about how the smaller pieces of the composition should fit together. I generally flip the piece horizontally a few times while checking the overall value structure and repositioning pieces, such as the bird. Flipping the piece is an easy way to see it with new eyes.

7 Blend in Painter

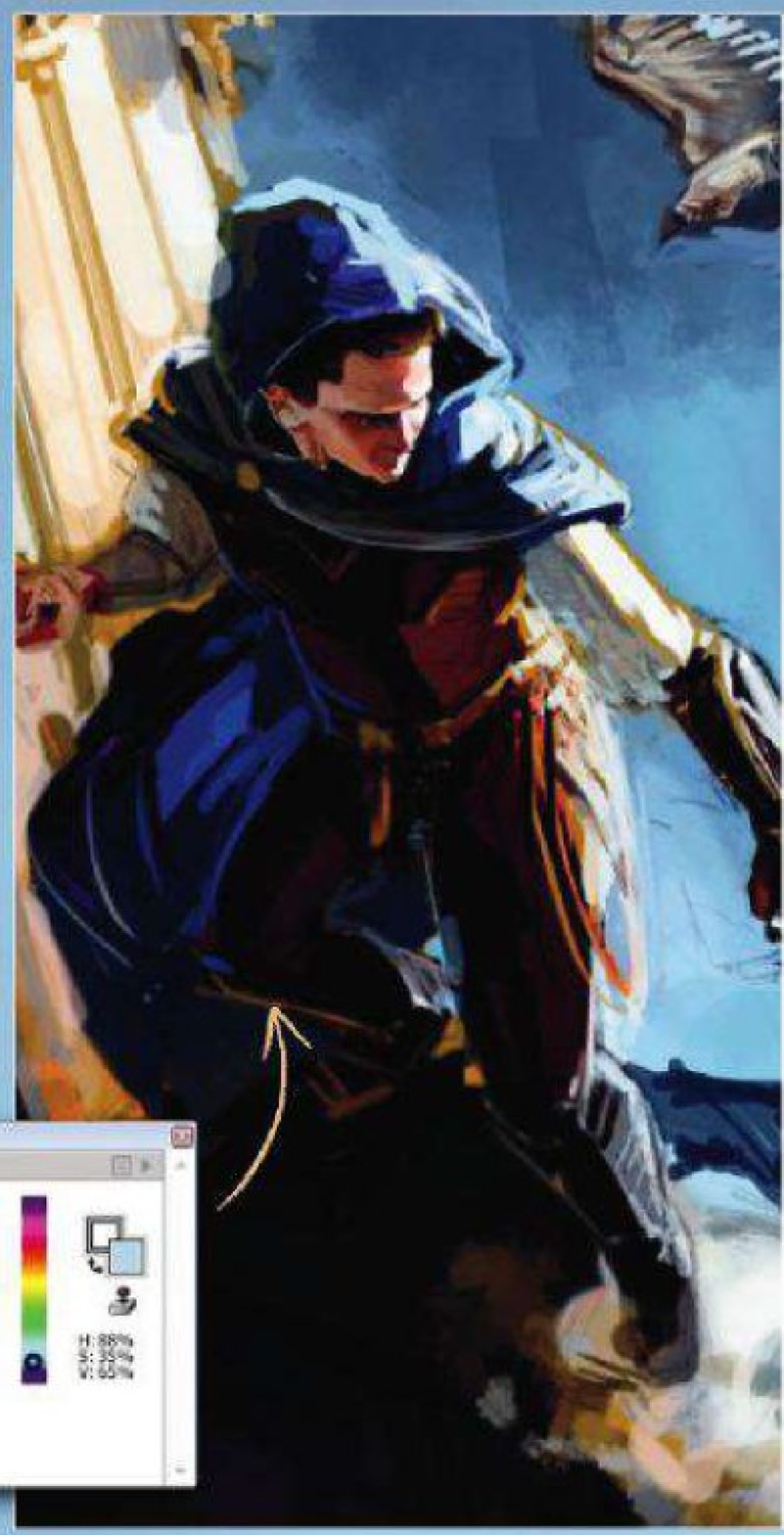
I blend in Painter with Don Seegmiller's Blender brush – which I got with his book Digital Character Design and Painting – and generally soften areas in shadow, areas that are behind other objects and less-important areas. The goal is to get a balance of soft and hard edges, although few of my edges are completely soft, since I paint in a fairly opaque style.



8 Detail the fabric

I usually twist an old sheet into an approximation of what the fabric's doing in any given piece and take some reference photos before I start detailing the fabric too much. This way, I can use the folds of the real fabric (in simplified form) to add authenticity to what I'm painting – in this case, the shadowy cloak. I'm also adding colours other than blue into the fabric, because large areas of similar colour and value usually benefit by having little touches of complementary colours added to them.









9 Blend and detail

I take the piece back into Painter and blend away any areas that look overly sketchy. In general, I'm aiming to have the most detail in the area just before the core shadow, as the form turns away from the light. I blend and detail areas such as the hands and gauntlet at this stage.

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Shortcuts

Draw a straight line in Photoshop

Shift (PC & Mac)

Hold down Shift while clicking on your desired start and end points.



10 Anatomy checks

This is the point where I spend a lot of time checking my references and further refining the anatomy. Still working in Painter, I concentrate on my character's face using a mixture of Don's Blender and the Round Camelhair in Oils at 54 per cent opacity, taking several passes to check that the features wrap correctly around the form of the skull.



11 Architecture

I bring the piece back into Photoshop to do the hard architecture detailing. I use the Shift key to make sure I'm getting straight lines, and go to town cleaning up the columns and adding detail. I keep patches of non-local colours with similar values on the background areas of the painting at this stage; they add to the overall traditional effect.

12 Flip and check

I continue flipping the piece horizontally to check the anatomy of my character. I work on the bird in Painter to get it more finalised, refining the feathers and anatomy, and also tweak the architecture in Photoshop. This is the midway point for me – from here, it's pretty much all detailing.



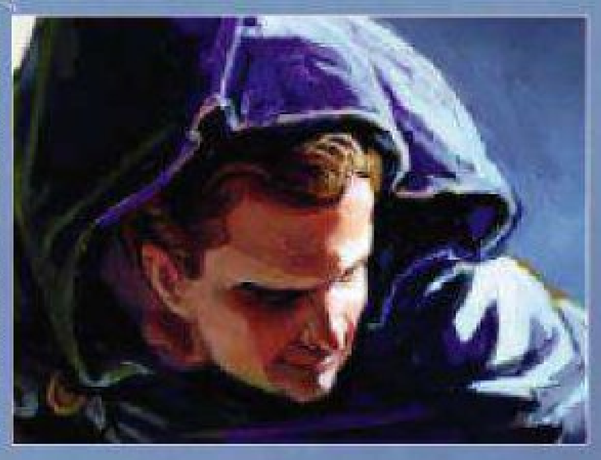
PRO SECRETS

Refer to the Navigator

I get a lot of mileage from keeping the Navigator window open in Photoshop. If you occasionally look at the thumbnail view of your piece in the early stages while working, you're much more likely to end up with a piece that has good composition and value contrasts.

13 Focus on the focal point

Here I add more detail to the character's face, returning to the main focal point at this late stage to ensure that it remains the key element of the piece. I always make sure to touch the focal point at the beginning and at the end of a piece. That way, I can make sure that the rest of the painting is subservient to it.



14 More facial work

There still isn't quite enough detail around the character's face, so I add a subtle pattern into the edge of the cloak hood with a custom brush I've made in Photoshop, then painted over it in Painter to integrate the pattern. I also print the piece to check if there are any areas still in need of blending or more detail.

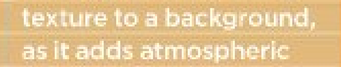


ON THE DVD

WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

CUSTOM BRUSH: CLOUD/BACKGROUND



This is great for adding texture to a background, as it adds atmospheric haze while avoiding that airbrushed look.

CUSTOM BRUSH: SPONGE



Ideal for adding texture. Here I used it on the columns and the outfit.



15 Last details

I revisit the bird's anatomy because the front wing looks wrong. Even if I have a reference of something in the pose I've painted, sometimes it'll look odd or incorrect and need adjusting. I detail the last bits of his gauntlet, do the final bits of architecture detailing, and tweak the Levels and up the Saturation slightly in Adjustment layers.

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FANTASY & SCI-FI DIGITAL ART

ImagineFX Reviews

Artist's Choice Award
Software and hardware with a five-star rating receives the IFX Artist's Choice award!

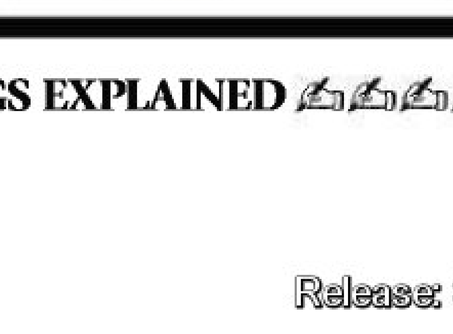
The latest digital art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team…



12 PRODUCTS ON TEST







HARDWARE & SOFTWARE

106 Canon IXUS 220 HS
This compact camera is ideal for capturing real-life reference material.

108 Smoke 1.2
Create twists and swirls with this one-trick abstract art tool.

108 PhiMatrix 1.618
Get ideal proportions in your work with this grid overlay application.

109 Nomad Brush
An affordable alternative to finger painting on your touchscreen.

109 PenGo Paint 1.0
A selection of over 40 iPad brushes that respond to your stroke speed.



BOOKS

110 New reads
Animals: Real and Imagined; Battle Milk 2; Framed Ink.

TRAINING

111 Mixed Media Painting
Jane Radstrom's figure study tutorial will suit beginners and pros alike.

FILMS

112 New movies
The Walking Dead; The Ward; The Green Hornet.



RATINGS EXPLAINED Magnificent Good Ordinary Poor Atrocious

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The IXUS 220 HS produces images with accurate colours that are vibrant without being excessively saturated. There's also plenty of detail in photos taken even at the lower sensitivity settings.

MAC & PC

imagineFX ARTIST'S CHOICE

IXUS 220 HS

SNAP FREEDOM If you're keen on capturing real reference material while out, then Canon's compact device will be right up your street

Price £199 **Company** Canon **Web** www.canon.co.uk **Contact** 01737 220 000

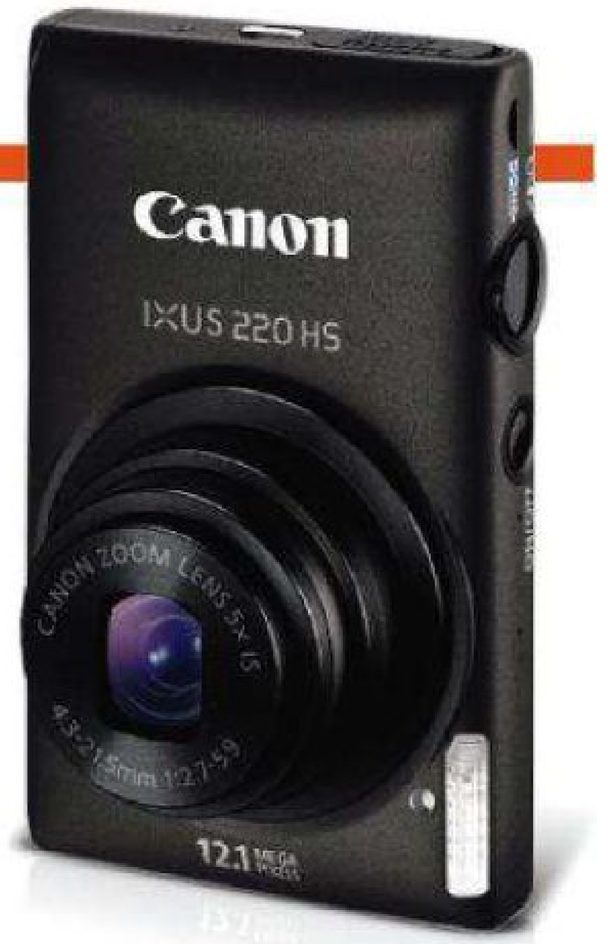
Canon's new 12 megapixel IXUS 220 HS is a great carry-everywhere camera, and for that reason stands out as a neat gadget to have around if inspiration strikes, whether you use it to capture references or textures. Measuring just 92x56x20mm and weighing 141g, it's small and light enough to just slip into your pocket without really noticing it's there, yet its stainless steel body keeps it safe if you really do forget about it.

It's easy to use and its controls feel well made and responsive. Its wider-than-average stabilised 24-120mm equivalent lens is suitable for recording sweeping vistas and portraits as well as isolating details. It can focus on objects as close as 3cm from the front element in macro mode – perfect for capturing textures for digital art.

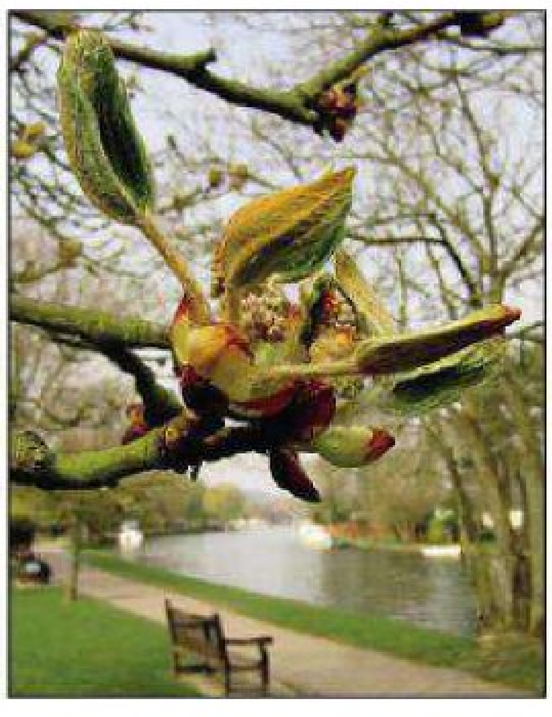
When you want to keep things simple and quick, there's the Smart Auto feature, which uses 32 reference scenes to automatically determine the optimum settings to use.

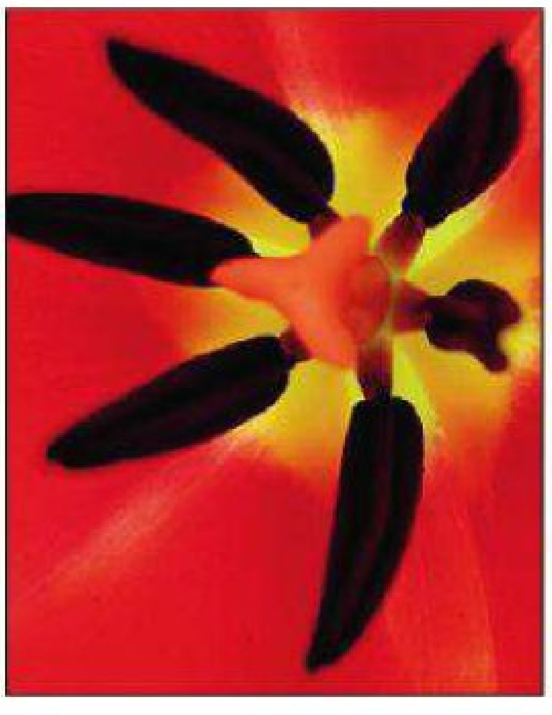
Alternatively, as well as Program mode, which gives the user the greatest level of control, there's a healthy selection of shooting modes available including options suited for use when shooting on the beach or underwater (using the optional waterproof case) and to trigger the shutter when the subject smiles or

Small enough to fit in your pocket, this camera can always be ready to capture any colours, shapes or textures that inspire you on your travels.



The 5x optical zoom can photograph distant landscapes or focus on objects just 3cm away.









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The 2.7-inch LCD display shows the scene clearly, so you can take just the right reference picture.

winks. The Tracking AF (autofocus) system is also useful when shooting moving subjects or using the popular focus-and-recompose technique, but face detection AiAF is on hand, and is a great choice for photographing social events, or indeed for capturing facial reference for portraits.

As well as capturing still images, the IXUS 220 HS can record full HD (1,080p) movies with stereo sound and Dynamic IS to help keep the footage shake-free. Movie Digest, which captures up to four seconds of the action before a shot is taken and joins all the clips together into a single VGA movie, is a fun addition.

Like most modern compact cameras, the IXUS 220 HS doesn't have an optical viewfinder, so images are all composed on the 2.7-inch 230,000 dots LCD screen. Apart from in very bright conditions when reflections become an issue, this provides a clear view of the scene.

Most importantly, the IXUS 220 HS produces high-quality images. Although they become softer as the ISO setting is increased, there's little sign of coloured speckling. At the lower sensitivity settings, it captures an impressive level of detail. Images are well exposed and the camera's white balance system puts in an excellent performance under a range of lighting conditions. Colours are generally well reproduced and vibrant without being excessively saturated. It's a cracking little camera, a small do-all answer to the need to capture new textures and references whenever and wherever the urge takes hold.

“It's a cracking little camera, a small do-all answer to the need to capture new textures and references”

DETAILS

Features

- 12.1 megapixel back-illuminated CMOS sensor
- 24-120mm (equivalent) 5x optical zoom lens
- Optical image stabilisation
- Stainless steel body
- 2.7-inch (6.7cm) PureColor II G LCD
- Full HD (1,920x1,080 pixel) video
- Smart Auto mode
- Closest focus 3cm from lens in macro focus mode
- Creative shooting modes
- SD/SDHC/SDXC /MMC compatible

Rating

Kev selected three digital photos, and used Color Range in Photoshop to isolate specific areas of each one. He used the watery one to create a Texturize filter over a digital paint sketch, which he applied three times.





For the other photographic textures, Kev adjusted the colours and used the Multiply and Overlay blending modes, erasing areas so the face didn't become too obscured.

ARTIST INTERVIEW

KEV CROSSLEY

Using photos can take your art in bold new directions

How do you use photographs in your digital art?
Photos are versatile additions to a digital image. Photoshop has some nice tricks for incorporating photos into artwork, the most obvious being the blending modes and layer transparency. However, I tend to use Color Range to select specific areas, import these selections into my artwork file, then adjust the opacity, blending mode, colour balance and so on to achieve any number of textural effects.

How useful is it to take photos for reference or textures?
Quite often while you're out and about you'll see something that's inspiring, or simply looks cool, and it's at times like this that a camera is very useful. A painting or a fantasy environment can be designed around features within a photograph, or photographic elements can be used to make your art that little bit more interesting.

Do you have a library of reference images, and why?
I have a massive library of photos I've taken since I got my first digital camera in 2003. It's an amazing resource, and because they are your own images, anything you produce using them will be utterly unique.

What's an ideal-sized photo for creating textures from?
It seems obvious, but the bigger the better! My current camera's 7MP provides enough detail for use in hi-res artwork. (The largest images it captures are 2,304x3,072 pixels.

Any set-up or usage tips?
I tend to save my photos as JPEGS, for no other reason than I've always done so! I always have my camera set to the maximum image size, and because it has auto-focus I don't have to worry about taking too many blurred images, although the few that turn up can sometimes still be useful creatively!



Kev worked for 14 years in the games industry, and has produced art for numerous books, comics and magazines.

www.kevcrossley.com

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Create gorgeous twists and swirls for special effects or sheer enjoyment with the simple painting tool Smoke.

Smoke 1.2

MAC ONLY

ABSTRACT ART Create magical effects or character backdrops with a painting tool that's built for play

Price £8 **Company** Neatberry **Web** www.neatberry.com **Contact** support@neatberry.com

Neatberry's Smoke is a one-trick pony, but it's a pleasant trick nonetheless. The single brush available in this abstract art tool is a fluid multi-tipped design that enables you to make lovely, flowing forms with the minimum of effort. You can use Smoke to create backdrops for portraits or concept art, whip up colourful swirls and wisps for magic effects, or just create something beautiful as you play around with the settings.

The brush comprises several points that twist and turn as you paint, diverging as you increase the stroke speed. You can use a graphics tablet to lay down natural strokes, although Smoke doesn't respond to pressure sensitivity, only pen speed – a great shame. The Parameters palette enables you to control the variance of colour within each stroke, both by limiting or increasing the palette and by controlling the speed at which Smoke cycles through the available palette. You can also decide how transparent the strokes are, how close together the brush points are and to what extent the space between them is filled in.

The second disappointment after tablet support is the lack of presets for saving your favourite brush combos. This also means there are no ready-made presets to provide inspiration.

More advanced controls include the ability to work on a transparent canvas, although the option's hidden within OS X's default colour picker when it should be prominent in Smoke's toolbar. Choosing between additive and subtractive blending modes offers further variety, but more options would have been welcome.

Smoke is capable of some undeniably pretty results and is an affordable addition to your artistic arsenal, but the developers could have gone further in offering customisation choices, and the lack of presets is a significant flaw. In Neatberry's defence, the development team seems to be regularly adding new features, making Smoke worth keeping an eye on, if not necessarily worth buying just yet.



As you learn to control and combine the customisation options, you can greatly vary the output Smoke can achieve.

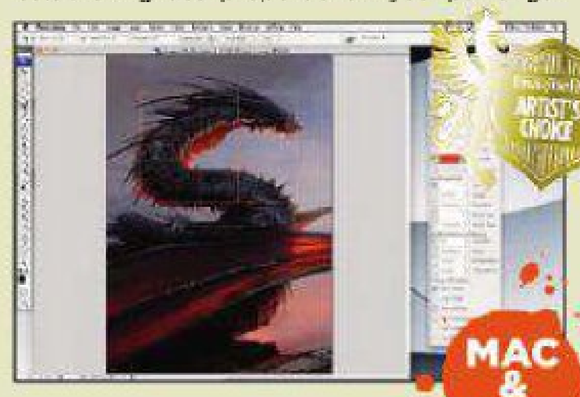
DETAILS

Features
- Fluid effect brush
- Adjustable size and width
- Colour cycling control
- Opacity control
- Coloured or transparent background
- Two blending modes
- Tileable for texture-making

System Requirements
Mac OS X 10.6

Rating

PhiMatrix 1.618 offers a huge range of grids for establishing ideal proportions in your paintings.



MAC & PC

PhiMatrix 1.618

GOLDEN RATIO Bring artistic harmony to your fantasy compositions

Price $20 (home use)
Company PhiPoint Solutions
Web www.phimatrix.com

RATING

The 1.618 in the name of this grid-based measuring tool isn't a version number. It's actually a reference to the value of phi, the number behind the famous Golden Ratio that gives you control over achieving harmonious proportions in your artwork. But never mind those numbers: PhiMatrix 1.618 offers an exhaustive set of options for exploiting this magical piece of maths.

The program is essentially a grid overlay, which you can position and scale over your image as you work on it, so you can assess and adjust your composition or proportions. Where PhiMatrix scores over similar programs we've tried, such as XgoldenSection which we reviewed in issue 68, is the sheer variety of grids based on the Golden Ratio. You'll find rectangles, circles, ovals and triangles; the Golden Spiral; and loads of permutations for dividing space with diagonals. PhiMatrix even chucks in a Rule of Thirds grid, a face proportion tool and the Levin system for perfectly proportioned teeth. We're less convinced about its colour palette generator that's based on the Golden Ratio, but points for effort.

You can customise any grid's colour, thickness and transparency to suit, and save and reload any grid settings you find useful enough for future projects. Cramming in this many options means that PhiMatrix 1.618 isn't the most elegant tool you'll ever use, but it's one of the most useful for anyone who refuses to leave composition up to chance in their artwork.

The brush's fibres conduct electricity, which registers as activity on the touchscreen.



iPad

Nomad Brush

THE REAL THING An affordable alternative to a rubber stylus

Price $24
Company NomadBrush
Web www.nomadbrush.com
RATING

Using a finger for touchscreen painting is fine for dabbling, but many artists soon crave the reassurance of a pen or brush. The first styluses for tablet devices were functional if uninspiring, but now we're seeing a new generation of drawing tools with an emphasis on drawing comfort.

The Nomad Brush looks much like a standard brush for oil painting, but its fibre blend conducts the tiny amount of electricity in your hand that tablet devices need to register your touch. In other words, you can use it to paint on your touchscreen. Although it's being marketed at iPad owners because of that brand's lead in the tablet market, it works with Android tablets or any device that uses a capacitive touchscreen. It's not a substitute for your graphic tablet stylus, however.

Light but well-constructed, the Nomad Brush is a delight to use. You don't need to press hard: it really is like using a brush on canvas. Bear in mind, though, that it's conceptually no different from a stylus tip despite its sophistication: it's the painting app you use that dictates the style and size of the marks you make.



If you're tired of finger painting on the iPad then the Nomad Brush may be the ideal alternative.



Dynamic brushes that respond to your stroke speed to vary width and opacity make PenGo Paint a pleasure to draw with.

In addition to the colour palette, tap the screen once to bring up a colour picker and choose an existing hue.



PenGo Paint 1.0

iPad

SMART ART Brushes that respond to how fast you paint help to take this iPad art app to the top of the class

Price £0.59 **Company** PenGo Creative **Web** www.pengopaint.com **Contact** Via website

Even a glance at the PenGo website makes it plain that this is a company on a mission to rethink how iPad and touchscreen art can be made. Alongside PenGo Paint, its flagship app, PenGo is also developing a range of styluses that go beyond the conventional flat rubber tip. There are some exciting possibilities for tailoring the stylus and app to work in close harmony.

So it's almost deflating to open up PenGo Paint and find what looks like a perfectly standard painting app. Touching a nub at the top of the screen reveals a standard-looking toolbar, with icons giving access to brush selection, layers, undo and a colour palette. This is hardly reinventing the wheel. And then you start to paint, and discover the details that make all the difference.

First is a Dynamic Brush mode, toggled on and off by a three-fingered tap on the screen. This mode responds to the speed at which you move your finger or stylus: the faster the flick, the lighter your brush stroke. The iPad screen isn't capable of responding to pressure in the same way as a graphics tablet, but this is a reasonable facsimile. You can also optionally adjust the brush opacity with your stroke speed.

If you apply a stroke with two fingers then PenGo Paint has another trick up its sleeve. As you apply the stroke, you can broaden or narrow the distance between your fingers to control the stroke's width at each point.

These options combine with the choice of stamps for each of the five brush and pen types to offer an exceptional painting and, in particular, drawing experience. The lines you can create have a liveliness and suppleness that you don't typically associate with iPad painting. It's hard for new art apps to force their way through the crowd of established players, but PenGo Paint looks like it has enough going for it to make a splash.

DETAILS

Features
- Five brush types plus eraser
- Brush stamps and editable properties
- Save custom brushes as presets
- Smudge tool
- Natural brush dynamics
- Layer support
- Undo and redo
- One-tap colour picker
- User gallery
- Export as Photoshop or PNG

System Requirements
iPad 1 or 2; iOS 3.2 or later

Rating

ArtStation.com



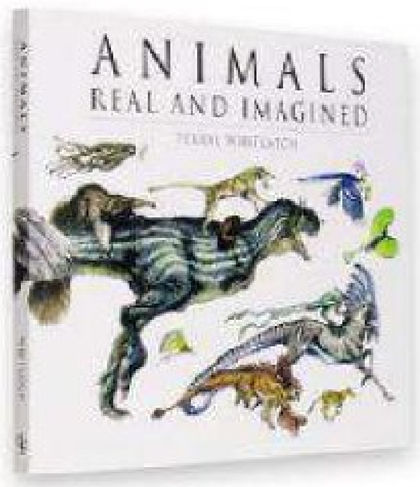
Animals: Real and Imagined

BELIEVABLE BESTIARY A life's obsession with animals makes this book burst with technical brilliance

Editor Gilbert Banducci **Publisher** Design Studio Press **Price** £25
Web www.designstudiopress.com **ISBN** 9781933492926 **Available** Now

From the moment Terryl Whitlatch found herself staring up the nostrils of a palomino parade horse at the age of three, animals have dominated her imagination. Having tethered her precocious talent for art to this fascination, Terryl has since become a wildlife illustrator, a palaeontological reconstructionist, a lecturer, and an animal designer for video games and films such as Jumanji and The Phantom Menace.

Yet her first love is drawing animals "as they really are". This humble claim isn't strictly true, because no one draws animals like Terryl Whitlatch. Through the first chapter we're given an array of detailed animal paintings. And whether it's a reclining kangaroo, a peacock in profile or a squirrel monkey in flight, each picture displays an uncanny presence, a striking personality that emanates from the page.



The next chapter looks at mostly full-colour fantasy creatures, equally inspired by anatomical precision, but with an imaginative freedom in combining anatomical elements to produce new beasties. Here, Terryl says that "what a creature looks like is exactly what it needs to do" and we begin to understand the conceptual work behind the believability of her art.

'Sketchbooks and Demos' is the heart of the book, a chapter that shows dozens of real and unreal animals drawn "from the bones up". The artist's one-line notes surround each sketch – we're told where the fur whorl must be, where to locate the top of the scapular cartilage, for example. It's also here that we notice the main weakness of the book: its lack of guiding text. Sure, there are erudite introductions to each section, but with the sheer amount of technical information in play here, each image could easily justify its own full workshop – and there are sometimes 10 images per page.

So as we venture into the equally crammed chapter Stylized and Animated Characters, which brings with it a new set of skills, it becomes clear we're not going to have a breakdown of Terryl's art secrets (perhaps we'll have to go to her lectures for that). But there's still much to be learnt from marvelling, and to prove the point the book finishes on Creating Worlds, an in-depth example of creating a whole world around a single creature character. It's a final impressive display of technical skill and artistic imagination, something this artist – and her book – has in abundance.

RATING 4/5

Further reading...

Clone War artists parade their work, and a comic master explains his craft

Battle Milk 2

Edited Christina Apeles
Publisher Design Studio Press **Price** £20
ISBN 9781933492537 **Available** Now
RATING 4/5



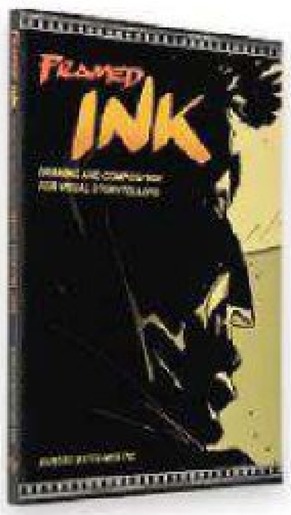
Battle Milk 2 adds two more Star Wars: The Clone Wars artists to the team of the first book, further exploring the art they create when the whistle blows on their day job.

Wayne Lo, Thang Le, Le Tang, Kilian Plunkett, Jackson Sze and David Le Merrer capture their favourite fleeting mental images on paper. There are whimsical extended doodles and polished finished pieces, but even the speediest of speedpaints here looks thorough, layered and charged by a story eager to communicate.

With sparse accompanying text it's this range of technical skills shown by these six artists, honed in the daily deadline world of their Clone Wars day job, that makes this book stand out.

Framed Ink

Edited Marcos Mateu-Mestre
Publisher Design Studio Press **Price** £20
ISBN 9780857681119 **Available** Now
RATING 5/5



Like Will Eisner's classic theory book Comics and Sequential Art, Marcos Mateu-Mestre's Framed Ink takes the elements of comic art and makes them resound.

For graphic design and art students, and those just wanting a thorough theoretical appreciation of the craft, Marcos uses his 20-plus years of knowledge to pin down the essential theories behind single panel and sequential storytelling.

The book uses hundreds of his black and white illustrations and diagrams. His harsh, scratchy drawing style may take some time getting used to, but once you've got it, there's enough here to remind you why comics remain one of the most important art forms around.

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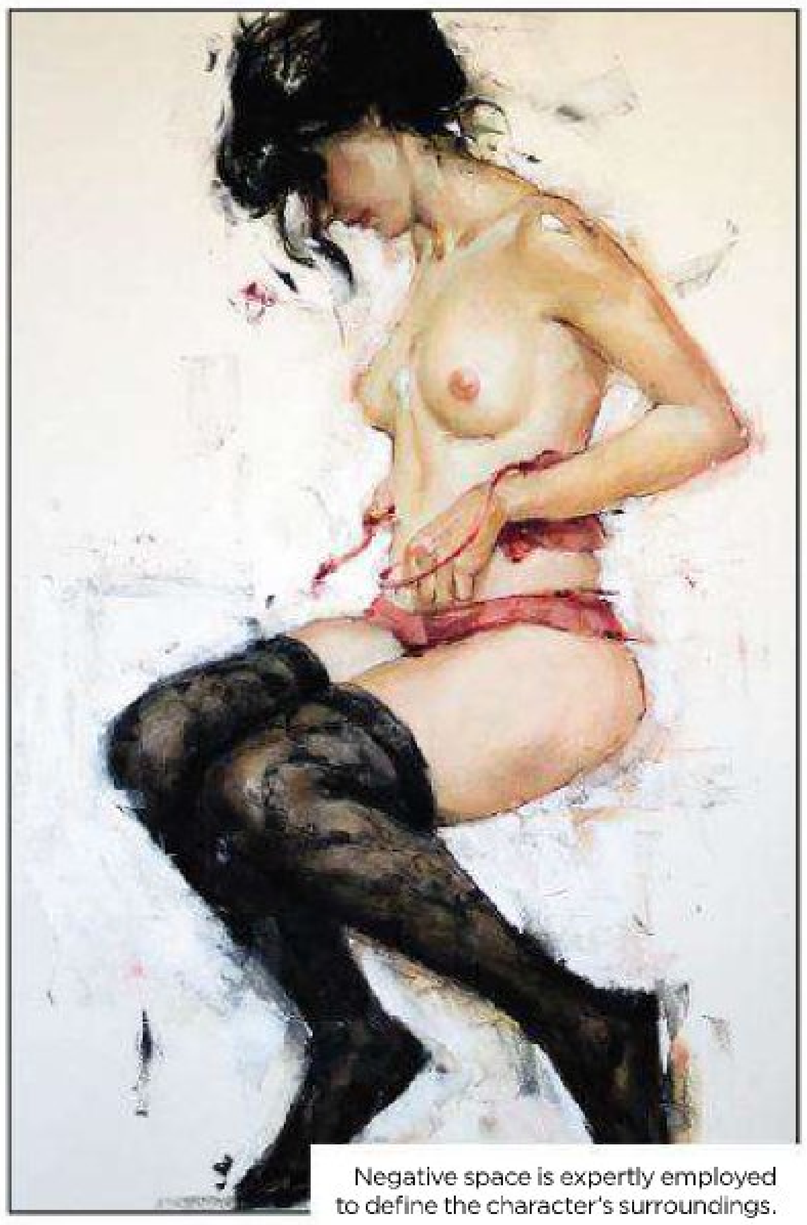








Jane uses a selection of photo references as a starting point, before drawing on her extensive experience with life studies to complete the figure painting.



Negative space is expertly employed to define the character's surroundings.

Jane Radstrom: Mixed-Media Painting Volumes 1 & 2

BODY LANGUAGE A graceful figure study from this accomplished painter has much to teach both art newcomers and seasoned veterans

Publisher The Art Department **Price** $20 per volume **Format** Download **Web** www.theartdepartment.org/store

There are no epic fantasy battles or sweeping alien vistas in this two-part download. Jane Radstrom has something more modest in mind as she crafts a simple study of a semi-clothed model, with negative space defining her seating. Each volume more or less works on its own, but you'll get the most value if you splurge on both.

In volume 1, Jane spends an hour blocking out the composition in pastels. Although she's working only from photo reference, Jane's clearly using the experience of many life-drawing sessions as she defines the figure in line, paying attention to areas where overlapping forms establish depth. Next is the application of bright pastels such as turquoise to indicate colour temperature. As areas of light and shadow are built up, you'll see how Jane uses contrast to separate forms.

The second, longer volume focuses on detailing, with fine pastel work combining with paint-thinner washes and oil-paint accents to create a figure that possesses mass and energy. Jane's never afraid to re-examine her earlier decisions, correcting anatomy even in the later stages of the session.

Throughout this piece's development, Jane explains her thinking with precision and passion. She offers a pragmatic philosophy for creating art, where knowledge of principles and techniques is in the service of creating an image that works. That makes her insights applicable to a broad range of disciplines, not just the large-scale, figure-based art she uses as her example.

If there's a single flaw in this excellent video, it's the sound: the room acoustics make following Jane's thoughts quite hard on occasion, especially when the occasional snippets of background music are mixed too high in the recording. But don't let that put you off: there's a lot to be inspired by here.

DETAILS

Topics covered
- Blocking out the form
- Skin tone and hue
- Establishing dimensionality
- Hard and soft edges
- Suggesting detail
- Figure anatomy

Length
Volume 1: 60 minutes
Volume 2: 76 minutes

Rating

ARTIST PROFILE

JANE RADSTROM

Jane Radstrom is a freelance painter and designer based in Austin, Texas. In addition to working for clients nationwide, she teaches figure drawing for the Academy of Art University Online and The Art Department. Her training includes time studying under Ron Lemen and Jeff Watts at Watts Atelier in California, the Illustration Academy intensive workshop, a mentorship with renowned illustrator Mark English, and a BFA with Honors from Ringling College of Art and Design.



janerad.blogspot.com

filmkagg.com



The comic's zombies are recreated with personality.

The Walking Dead

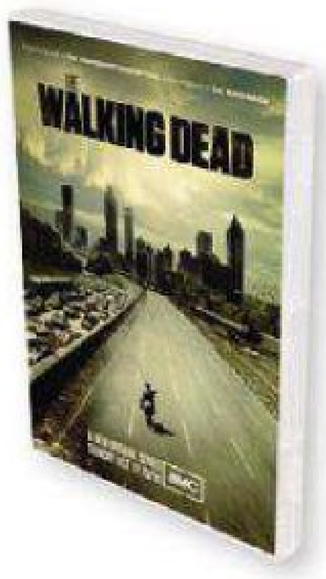
DEAD EYES The comic-inspired zombie series is filled with more tension than a corpse's hamstring

Distributor E1 Entertainment **Cert** 15 **Price** £30 (£35 Blu-ray) **Available** 16 May

How far will you go to survive? Not just the bar queue at The Winchester, but real survival against the odds when you're facing the end of the world. That's the question posed after six episodes and four-and-a-half hours of gory zombie fun in The Walking Dead.

Created by Frank Darabont, and based on the comic by Robert Kirkman, The Walking Dead is a well-paced and engaging series. It follows police officer Rick Grimes's obstinate struggle to find his wife and son, before his equally single-minded survival instincts kick in and he leads a ragtag band of refugees to safety – wherever that is.

With Robert on board to flesh out the script and Frank's attention to detail echoing illustrator Tony Moore's original comic panels and stylised covers, The Walking Dead manages to evoke the look of the comic perfectly. But the show's scope is bigger. Whether it's the subtle costume designs or the widescreen sense of desolation, this feels like a TV show with grand designs.



The zombie menace isn't the blank canvas usually associated with the genre. Though a slow, constant threat, the VFX team has managed to capture the personality that's exhibited by the zombie horde in the original comics.

No matter the unfettered threat of the walking dead, like all these shows the real tension here comes from internal strife. To the show's credit, favourite characters aren't spared a gruesome ending and the tease of tying up the season's plots never materialises, leaving you as numb as the refugees' plight, but eager to see a second season.



It's all about survival; the whys and hows of the zombie invasion are never tackled.

RATING ✍✍✍✍✍

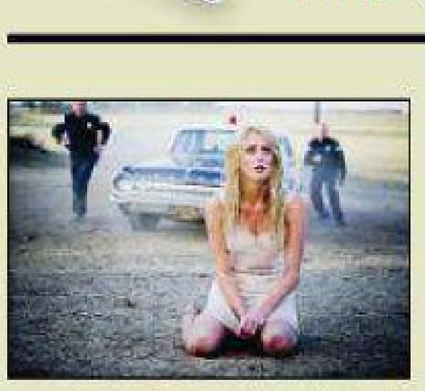
Also look at…

John Carpenter and Michel Gondry's latest releases have some original ideas



The Ward

Distributor Warner Home Video
Certificate 15
Price £16 (£23 Blu-ray)
Available 16 May
RATING ✍



A new slasher movie from John Carpenter, the genre legend who turned in taut, inventive horrors such as The Fog and The Thing, should get the nerves jangling.

Set in a 1966 psychiatric ward, an institutionalised woman named Kristen (Amber Heard) must battle a ghostly apparition that stalks the halls, as well as a host of grisly secrets that eagerly jump from the characters' cupboards. Everything's here to propose that John's first feature-length film in a decade is a genre masterclass, but sadly it doesn't hang together.

Despite the setup, a decent cast and a subtle mix of makeup and VFX, The Ward fails to excite. After John commits the ultimate sin and shows his new terror too often and in too much detail, any shock value in Kristen's fight for freedom is soon diminished. The final plot twist is the only surprise and that's because you wouldn't expect the director of Halloween to be so obvious.



The Green Hornet

Distributor Sony Pictures
Certificate 12
Price £20 (£25 Blu-ray)
Available Now
RATING ✍✍✍



Director Michel Gondry may be a naturally inventive filmmaker, but all his best work has come when collaboration channels his flighty imagination. So The Green Hornet is a tantalising prospect: Michel in charge of a big budget action flick, anchored by a script from Pineapple Express writers Evan Goldberg and Seth Rogen.

With the death of his media mogul father, Britt Reid inherits The Daily Sentinel newspaper and his dad's valet, the martial arts expert and technical wizard Kato. The pair don masks and instantly ruffle the feathers of LA's crime overlords and politically corrupt governors.

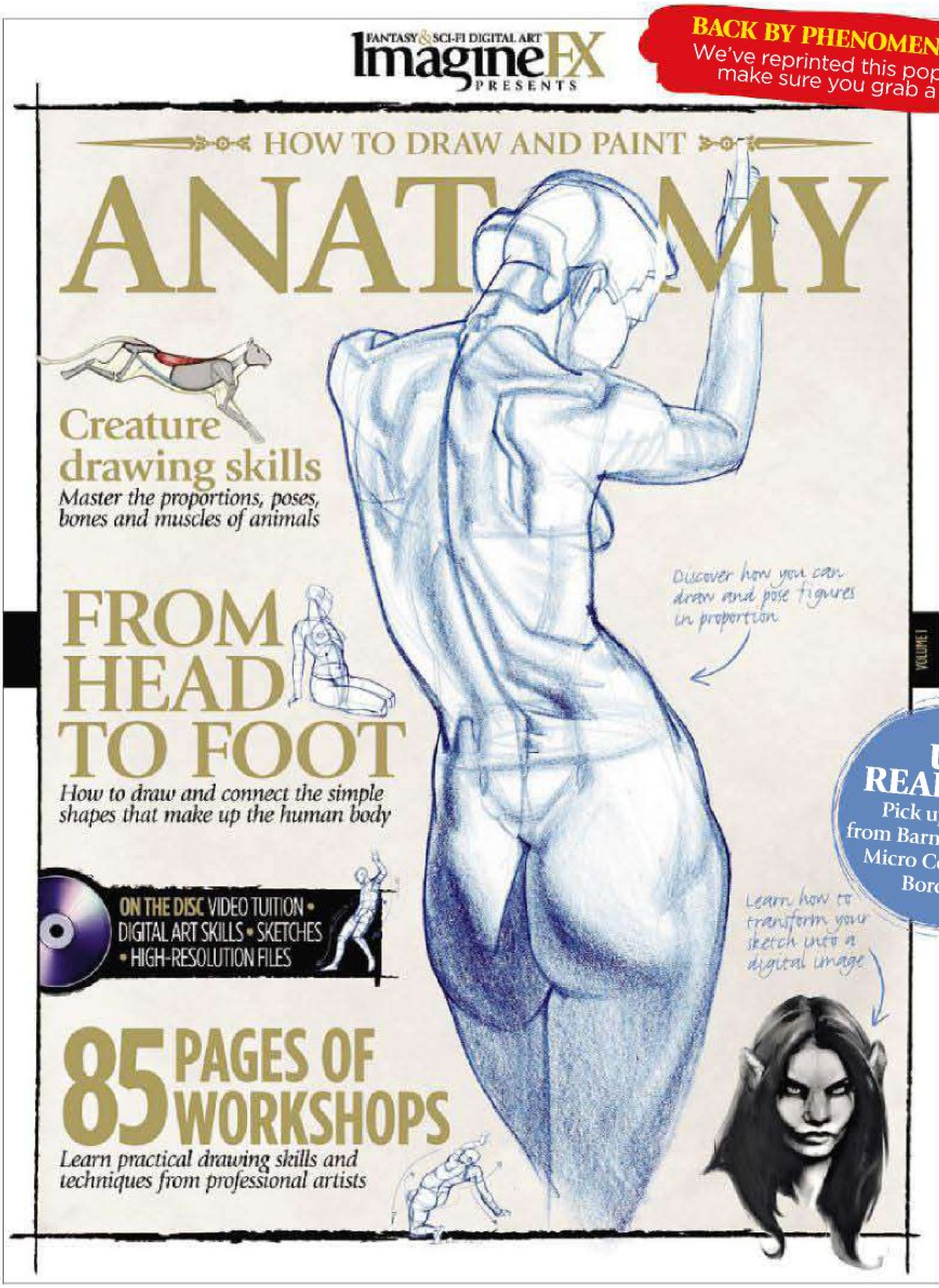
Seth's inane, bumble-grunt humour should be the perfect foil to Michel's aesthetics, but somehow they cancel each other out. The directing is anonymous, apart from infrequent psychedelic sequences, and Seth's inexplicably lucky putz character is utterly grating.

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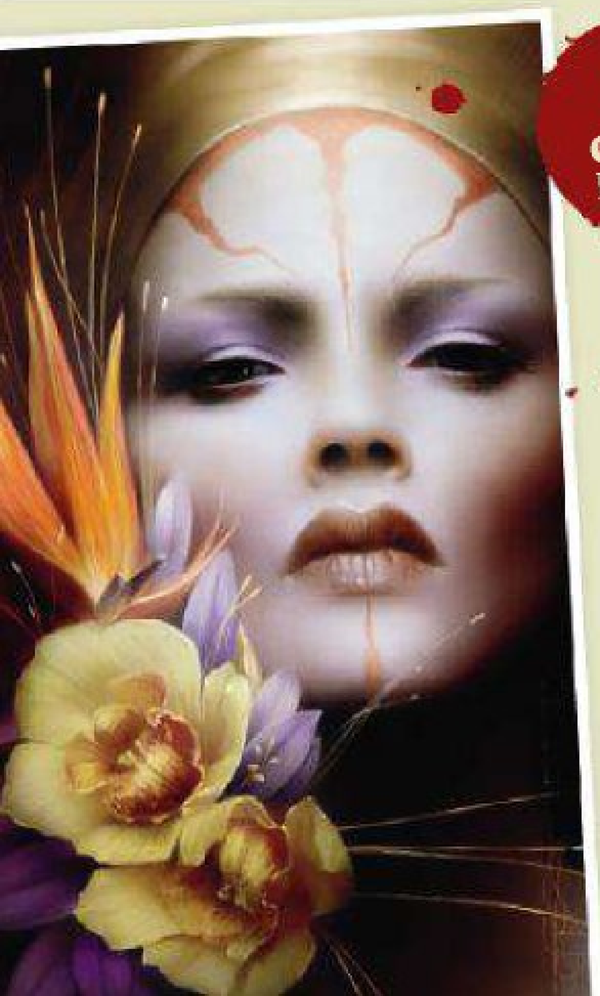
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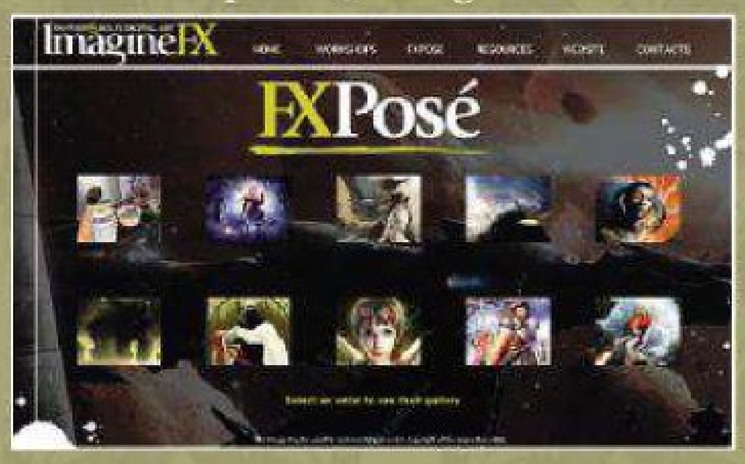
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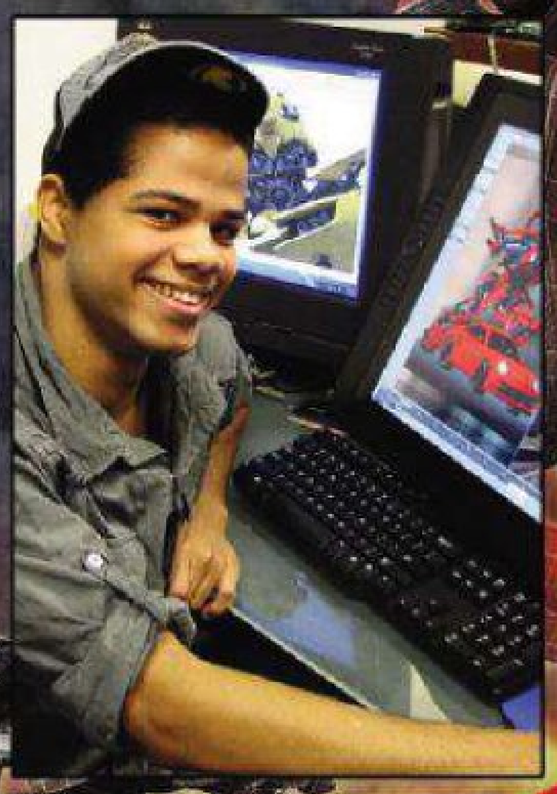
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